

# Bandwagon

THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth



SECTION 5 - DISCLOSING A FEW OF THE MANY RICHLY CARVED HUGE GOLDEN CHARIOTS, AND FAIRY LAND TABLEAUX IN THE GREAT FREE STREET PARADE

THE WORLD'S LARGEST, GRANDEST, BEST, AMUSEMENT INSTITUTION.

MAY-JUNE 1982



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### This Month's Cover

As part of its effort to advertise its new street parade, the Barnum and Bailey Circus commissioned the Strobbridge Lithograph Company to print a series of posters showing the new wagons. The artist, probably Strobbridge's Harry Ogden, chose to put Washington, Lincoln, Grant, McKinley, and Theodore Roosevelt on the Our Country wagon, an interesting choice that tells us something about turn of the century mores. Grant, rated one of our worst Presidents today, was immensely popular at that time, mainly because of his Civil War heroics, and McKinley was certainly included as a result of his assassination in Buffalo in 1901. Roosevelt was the then incumbent chief executive, and it is doubtful that the sitting President could be used for such commercial purposes today.

Photographs of the parade indicate that these five Presidents were indeed represented on the wagon in parade. Circus World Museum Collection.

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#### CHS MEMBER NEW OWNER OF BEATTY-COLE

Douglas Holwadel, Columbia, South  
Carolina, a long time member of the Cir-

cus Historical Society, is now co-owner of  
the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus.

Holwadel joined with circus manager  
John Pugh to purchase the show from the  
Florida State University Foundation, who  
had received it as a gift from Jerry Collins  
in December 1981.

A very interesting article and a color  
photo of Holwadel with an elephant in  
front of a circus semi appeared in the May  
24, 1982 issue of *Forbes*, a business  
magazine. The article details the pur-  
chase.

In an interview with *Bandwagon* in  
Chicago, Ill., during the circus parade,  
Holwadel stated that a sizable investment  
had been made in new equipment for the  
1982 season, and that business has been  
good for the show to date. Plans call for  
the show to remain in the East during most  
of the season.

#### READERS COMMENTS

Two CHS members have raised a couple  
points in regard to the Barnum & Bailey/  
Buffalo Bill Ticket Wagon article in the last  
*Bandwagon*. Joe Bradbury sent in an ar-  
ticle from the September 8, 1928 *Billboard*  
which states the Robbins Bros. Circus first  
used "the beautiful new all-white, gold  
leaf trimmed reserved seat ticket wagon"  
at the Joplin, Missouri, stand on August  
20, 1925. Bradbury advises the Robbins  
show played Ponca City, Oklahoma, only  
about 10 miles from the 101 Ranch  
quarters at Marland, on August 18, 1928.  
One of the Schiller brothers had visited  
Ponca City earlier in the season on  
business, possibly the time at which the  
sale of the ticket wagon was consum-  
mated. August 19 was a Sunday, so if the  
ticket wagon was picked up at Ponca City,  
its first use would have been at the Joplin  
stand on Monday.

Bradbury and Dave Price both pointed  
out that the hippo Victor came to the  
Howes show from the National Zoo at  
Washington, not from the Sells Floto  
show. This fact is recorded in Bradbury's  
article on the 1921 Howes show in the  
September-October, 1964 *Bandwagon*,  
p. 6. Greg Parkinson sent a view of the

rear end of the wagon taken by Frederick  
Glasier and pointed out another  
photograph of the two wagons while on  
Buffalo Bill in the catalog for the Buffalo  
Bill Show currently at the Carnegie  
Museum of Art in Pittsburgh (closes  
April 4).

#### BUFFALO BILL AND THE WILD WEST

1883 marks the centennial of the first  
wild west show organized by Buffalo Bill.  
In a prelude commemoration, the Buffalo  
Bill Historical Center, in conjunction with  
the Brooklyn Museum and the Museum of  
Art, Carnegie Institute, put on an exhibi-  
tion titled "Buffalo Bill and the Wild  
West." Although the show closes in Pitts-  
burgh on April 4, members desiring to  
view the exhibition can do so by purchas-  
ing a copy of the show catalog, which con-  
tains virtually every article that was in the  
show, not to mention six excellent essays  
spanning from the Buffalo Bill legend to  
the artists whom he inspired. The catalog  
costs \$11.95 plus a \$2.00 shipping and  
handling charge. An unusual half sheet  
poster announcing the exhibit costs \$9.00  
plus \$1.50 for mailing. Orders should be  
sent to Museum of Art Shop, Carnegie In-  
stitute, 4400 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh,  
Pa. 15213. A separate letter to the  
Museum's Public Relations Dept. may  
bring a copy of the exhibition's guidebook  
as long as they last.

#### Have You Paid Your Dues or Subscription Payment

The CHS dues and subscription notices  
were mailed late in April. The response to  
date has been very good.

If your payment is not received by July  
15, 1982, the July-August issue will not be  
sent to you. This is the final issue you will  
receive. If you have not as yet sent your  
payment, do so at once as you will not  
miss a single issue.

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and miscellaneous items too numerous to list.



# James A. Bailey's Last Parades 1903 & 1904

by Greg Parkinson

Throughout the era of the colossal circus street parades, the Barnum Circus<sup>1</sup> always presented one of the most spectacular horse-drawn processions to be viewed along the sidewalks, boardwalks, and curbs of America's cities and towns. The street marches produced in 1903 and 1904 by James A. Bailey were no exception. These parades were designed with several new units to exploit the success of the second tour (1897-1902) of "The Greatest Show On Earth" to Britain and the continent of Europe. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the new parade was intended to be the centerpiece of Bailey's scheme to reconquer popularity, as the Ringlings had successfully moved into traditional Barnum & Bailey territory during the interim.

On March 18, 1903 Barnum & Bailey Circus opened in Madison Square Garden and began its first engagement on American soil in over five years. A special new set of parade posters designed by Strobridge Litho Co. demonstrated the management's intent that the "Million Dollar Grand Street Pageant" was to play a considerable role in telling the public that "The World's Largest, Grandest, Best Amusement Institution" was back. These lithographs and the 1903 *Realm* (courier) both illustrated the new wagons which were constructed by the Sebastian Works in New York City. Included were the Two Hemispheres Bandwagon, the four continental telescoping tableau wagons:



After the Egypt wagon was taken on the road the oars and pillars were removed, perhaps indicating a problem with telephone and telegraph wires, perennial enemies of tall parade wagons. Egypt survived the purge after the 1903 season, and returned to the show in 1904.

America, Asia, Africa, and Europe; Our Country; Funny Folks; Fairy Tales; and the Golden Age of Chivalry. The color schemes of all nine of these parade wagons are recorded in the *Realm*.

Four other vehicles which were built primarily in association with "The Tribute of Balkis" spec were on the parade inventory of 1903. These

The Twin Hemisphere bandwagon was the largest parade wagon ever built for an American circus. It is pictured here, with the forty up, preparing for the daily march in 1903.

four floats replaced similar ones used in the "King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba" spectacle which was introduced in Paris late in 1901 and subsequently used throughout the 1902 tour of France.<sup>2</sup> These were the Triumphal Car of Balkis, the Phoenician Galley, the Throne Tableau Car (often called Egypt; sometimes called the Queen's Float), and the Imperial chariot (variously called the King of Babylon Float or the King's Float).<sup>3</sup> The earliest *Billboard* mention of the parade confirms the dual role that these four wagons played in the spec and the street parade.<sup>4</sup>

The order for thirteen new wagons from Sebastian touched off a boom in parade wagon construction. The Ringlings responded by ordering six new parade wagons from Bode Wagon Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio. These included the United States Bandwagon, Great Britain, Russia, Germany, the





Snake Den, and the cumbersome Pipe Organ wagon. An even bigger order was placed with the Milwaukee Ornamental Carving Co., which included five nation floats—Persia, India, Egypt, Spain, and France—a hippo den, a rhino den, and the Paradise tableau wagon.<sup>5</sup>

The fact that these new Barnum & Bailey wagons, for the most part, could carry no baggage has been a target of criticism for showpeople and historians alike. Just exactly who designed each of the wagons is not known, although the longtime Strobridge artist, Harry Ogden, was responsible for at least the design of the Two Hemispheres Bandwagon.<sup>6</sup> Its elaborate carvings were constructed in the Spanjer Bros. Newark, New Jersey shops.

The continental tableau wagons displayed ¾ size wooden copies of the four corner statues which surround the Prince Albert Memorial in Hyde Park, London. Each is themed to characterize the geography it portrays as well as the vastness of the British Empire at the time that Prince Albert was the consort of Queen Victoria. Plausible speculation suggests that the seeds for the idea to duplicate the statues on circus wagons were planted during one of the show's engagements in London or on one of Bailey's or George Starr's many trips to the British capital. In any event, Samuel A. Robb is credited with supervising the work on these gems of circus woodcarving.

One of the earliest significant events of the season took place on May 11, 1903 when the canvasmen and working men, who had formed a union just before the inauguration of the season, went on strike in Washington, D.C.<sup>7</sup> As a result, Barnum & Bailey was late arriving in several of the early season towns, and the parade was seldom presented at the time advertised. The reported cause of the strike was the show's failure to meet a demand for an increase of \$5 per month in wages. However, other sources suggested that the squabble was due, not to the difference in wages, but rather to the weight of the show.<sup>8</sup> Apparently it was the poundage of the seats that caused the most dissatisfaction among the workers. Bailey had had all of the seating built new and the reserved seats were made of iron, styled after French opera chairs which he had observed the year before.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the labor troubles and difficulties in erecting and tearing down the show, the "poor service" of the railroads causing late arrivals, was given part of the blame for lost performances and lost parades.<sup>10</sup>

The problems resulting from the extreme weight of the seats and bulk of the show were never completely



**The King's Wagon, another of the 1903 Sebastian group, also paraded in Waterloo, Iowa in 1904. This Glasier photo was taken in 1903.**

solved. However, the show reportedly began the season with 92 - 60' railroad cars and later cut back to 82 - 60' cars.<sup>11</sup> By mid-June things were running more smoothly.

The 1904 parade was nearly identical to the parade of 1903. Carl Clair's band rode on the Two Hemispheres. William Emery was the Superintendent of the elephant herd. The Drum Corps, listed in the route book as containing 16 members, doubled as "ushers" in the performance tent. No new parade wagons were known to have been built.

The season's first street march was made on the day that the circus opened under canvas in Brooklyn, April 25, 1904. During the month of May, parades were cancelled in Jersey City, Newark, and New Brunswick (New Jersey); Pittsburgh; East Liver-

pool, Akron, and Mansfield (Ohio); and Detroit. The reasons ranged from threatening weather to dates missed. On May 7, in Wilmington, Delaware, the "big bandwagon" and one of the tableau wagons were "wrecked" in the parade.<sup>12</sup> The seriousness of this incident can only be guessed at.

The only major reported threat to public safety during the parade, occurred in Ann Arbor, Michigan on June 16, when college students threw firecrackers at the elephants during the parade and caused a stampede. Although 15 minutes were required to corral all of the animals, no one was injured.<sup>13</sup>

Four dates in a row in early July, listed in the route book, give the reader the impression that any hint of showers caused the management to cancel the street parade. The horse-drawn procession was not a rain or shine event.

The last significant entry in the 1903-1904 route book relative to the street parade is found under the heading for Waterloo, Iowa, August 27, 1904. The statement simply reads, "The Whalen Mechanical Opera Company photographed the parade for use in moving picture machine."

**The America wagon was the only one of the four continental floats used on the show in 1904. This picture shows it in a Barnum and Bailey parade in the teens.**







In 1981, Fred D. Pfening, Jr. presented the Circus World Museum with the remarkable Barnum & Bailey parade movie which had been kept under wraps by P. M. McClintock of Franklin, Pa. (and before that, Detroit) for nearly 50 years. Fred Pfening's generosity has made available the film that was taken in 1904 by the Whalen Mechanical Opera Company in Waterloo.

The Barnum & Bailey "superb and surprising new triumphal street parade" was billed in Waterloo to begin at 10:00 a.m.<sup>14</sup> The route book reported clear and pleasant weather on that Saturday, and capacity business was recorded by both the route book and local newspapers.

The following is the parade order developed by an analysis of the 46 units appearing in the movie:

- (1) Two Hemispheres bandwagon drawn by 40 horse team.
- (2) Open Cage #70 drawn by 4 horse team
- (3) Open Cage #71 drawn by 4 horse team.
- (4) Open Cage #72 drawn by 4 horse team.
- (5) Open Cage #73 drawn by 4 horse team.

In the 1930's P. M. McClintock snipped frames from the 1904 film, and sold them to collectors. This one shows the former Forepaugh show lion bandwagon turning the corner.

- (6) Open Cage #74 drawn by 4 horse team.
- (7) L. B. Lent Bandchariot drawn by 8 horse team (built ca. 1870; acquired by Barnum show ca. 1877)
- (8) Closed Cage drawn by 4 horse team.<sup>15</sup>
- (9) Closed Cage drawn by 4 horse team.
- (10) Closed Cage drawn by 4 horse team.
- (11) Closed Cage drawn by 4 horse team.
- (12) Orchestmelchor drawn by 6 horse team (originated in 1868).<sup>16</sup>
- (13) Four mounted Ladies of the Hippodrome.
- (14) Six mounted Gentlemen Jockies.

Had this delivery wagon for Welch's not crossed the view of the camera on August 27, 1904 in Waterloo, Iowa, the location or year of this historic film could not have been identified. The former L. B. Lent shell band chariot passes by on the left.



- (15) Two Roman Chariots drawn by 2 horses each.
- (16) Two Roman Chariots drawn by 4 horses each.
- (17) Marching Fife & Drum Corps (13 members)
- (18) Our Country President's Float drawn by 6 horse team and American soldier outriders.
- (19) Golden Age of Chivalry drawn by 6 horse team and medieval knight outriders.
- (20) Funny Folks Tableau drawn by 6 horse team and jester outriders.

A remote possibility for missing units exists in this location due to camera editing.

- (21) Fairy Tales Tableau drawn by 6 horse team and herald outriders.
- (22) Tableau #51 drawn by 4 horse team (built ca. 1882).
- (23) Tableau #50 drawn by 4 horse team (built ca. 1882) with piper band.
- (24) 16 camels.
- (25) 20 elephants including two with howdahs.
- (26) Blue Beard Float drawn by 8 ponies (built ca. 1886).
- (27) Howes Great London Dragon Float drawn by 8 ponies (built in 1871; became part of the Barnum & London parade stock via the 1880 combination with Cooper, Bailey, & Co.).<sup>17</sup>
- (28) Chimes or Calliope Wagon drawn by 4 horse team (probably built ca. 1876) with canvas over openings.
- (29) Closed Cage drawn by 4 horse team.
- (30) Closed Cage drawn by 4 horse team.
- (31) Closed Cage drawn by 4 horse team.
- (32) Closed Cage drawn by 4 horse team.
- (33) Five Graces Bandwagon drawn by 8 horse team (built in 1878; became part of the Barnum & Bailey parade stock following their purchase of the Adam Forepaugh Circus in 1890).
- (34) Tableau #93 drawn by 4 horse team.
- (35) Closed Cage drawn by 4 horse team.
- (36) Closed Cage drawn by 4 horse team.
- (37) Closed Cage drawn by 4 horse team (referred to as the Barnum, Bailey & Hutchinson Cage #61 at CWM today).
- (38) Closed Cage drawn by 4 horse team.
- (39) America Tableau drawn by 6 horse team and U.S. soldier outriders.
- (40) Forepaugh Lion Bandchariot drawn by 6 horse team (built ca. 1868; replaced the Van Amburgh 1868 Lion Bandchariot in 1903).



- (41) Tableau/musical (?) wagon drawn by 6 horse team.
- (42) Two Roman Chariots drawn by 2 horses each.
- (43) King of Babylon Float drawn by 6 horses, without wings and candelabra.
- (44) Triumphal Car of Balkis drawn by 6 horse team.
- (45) Egypt Tableau drawn by 6 horse team (barely visible).

A possibility exists for units in this location, which are not visible.

- (46) Batcheller & Dorris Steam Calliope (built early 1880's; on Barnum & Bailey 1888-1904)<sup>18</sup> with only the smoke visible.

The parade wagons which were carried in 1903 which do not appear in the 1904 film are Asia, Europe, Africa, Little Red Riding Hood, Santa Claus, Cinderella, Old Woman in the Shoe, Old Mother Goose, Sindbad the Sailor, and the Phoenician Galley. Perhaps the Phoenician Galley was not used in 1904 as the spec was changed to the Dubar of Delhi.

Although one parade order for the 1898 summer tour of England filed at the Circus World Museum shows the pony floats immediately preceding the Steam Calliope at the end of the parade, all other photographic and printed evidence of the parade between 1898 and 1904 shows them following the elephant herd near the middle of the parade lineup.<sup>19</sup> Since only two pony floats appear after the elephants in the Waterloo film, it is probable that none of the above six floats paraded on the day the movie was made.

A check of other known pictures of the 1904 parade confirms the apparent absence of the same parade wagons missing from the Waterloo film, throughout the season. These included the Racine, Wisconsin set taken on August 6 (Pfening collection); the Battle Creek, Michigan set taken on June 8 (Thayer collection); photos taken in Kewanee, Illinois on July 23; photos taken in Duluth, Minnesota on August 20 (Florenz Family album at the Circus World Museum), and photos from the MacCaddon albums (copies in Thayer collection).

Circumstantial evidence points to the fact that the existing movie could have been the one that was made in Waterloo, Iowa in 1904. A letter from P. M. McClintock to Fred Pfening reports the date of the film as 1904. The summer foliage and residential background suggest a parade route in a city well past springtime. And the absence of the six pony floats and some of the continental floats in the movie is more likely to have reflected attrition from two long seasons than a parade "fresh out of winter quarters" in 1903.

Positive confirmation that the movie was taken in Waterloo came after a



One of the older wagons in the Waterloo parade, the Bell Wagon went back to the Flatfoot Barnum show of the late 1870's. The corner statues, two of which are in the Circus World Museum, indicate Fielding manufacture.

careful examination of the 35 mm negative now preserved at the Circus World Museum. It was discovered that the lettering on a small horse-drawn delivery wagon passing before the camera in the opposite direction of the parade, was readable. On its back doors were painted: "Carpet's" and below that "Dry Goods." Faintly visible on the wagon's side was the name of the establishment, "Welch's." Advertisements in every August, 1904 issue of the *Waterloo Times Tribune* supplied by the State Historical Society in Iowa City, Iowa, verified that a Welch's dry goods store was prominent in Waterloo at the time.

Barnum & Bailey's final engage-

The Whiskers cage, followed by another Fielding cage, is seen in this still taken from the Waterloo movie.



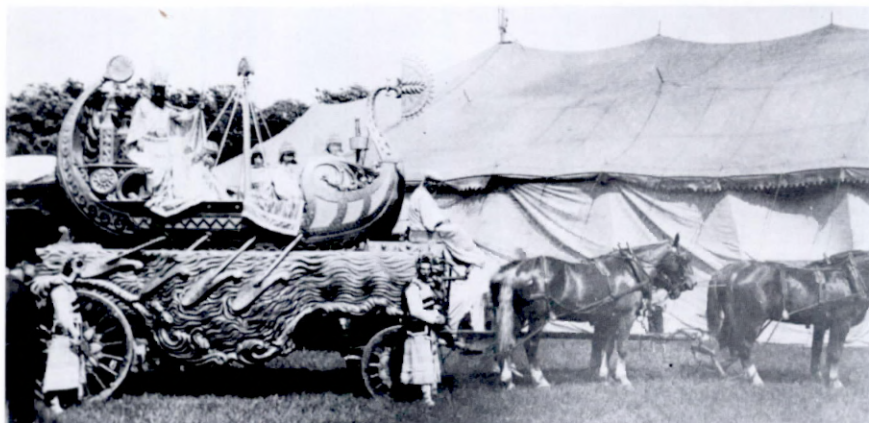
ment of 1904 was a fourteen day stand in Chicago's Coliseum. Since no street parade was given in Chicago,<sup>20</sup> it seems logical that the non-performing elements of the parade were sent back to Bridgeport with the canvas and seats following the last outdoor stand in Springfield, Mo. on October 1, 1904.

Barnum & Bailey's street parade was discontinued after the season of 1904. In its place, a free act was presented on the exhibition grounds. A newspaper advertisement for the show's engagement in San Francisco in 1905 read, "No street parade will be made, but a high class and very expensive Free Show will be given on the show grounds twice daily." The act which appeared was the high-wire act of Jean and Marie Weitzman, who performed to the accompaniment of a small brass band.

The street parade was not revived until after James A. Bailey died in April, 1906 and the Ringling Bros. took control of the Barnum show in 1908.

What conclusions can be reached about James Bailey's last parades of





1903 and 1904? First, they differed relatively little in quality or size from any other parade that Bailey produced during his quarter century association with "The Greatest Show On Earth." The parade orders on file at the Circus World Museum show a unit range as follows: 46 to 59 units in 1881, 51 units in 1889, 45 units in 1891, 46 units in 1893, 45 units in 1895, 59 units in 1896, 51 units in 1898, and 46 units in 1904.

Also they differed very little from the parades presented in Europe between 1898 and 1900. Although the content was different because of the addition of the new Sebastian wagons and a few other substitutions in 1903, the size of the parade and the arrangement of units was essentially the same.

Even on a day to day basis, the parade orders seldom fluctuated. The placement of the bandwagons, tableaux, pony floats, elephants, groups of cage wagons, and steam calliope was routinely the same. There was nothing catch-as-catch-can about the parade order.<sup>21</sup>

Why was the parade discontinued after 1904? While it seems fairly clear that the ultimate reason involved the overall cost of staging the parade coupled with the parade no longer being deemed an absolutely necessary expense, the 1905 Barnum & Bailey *Realm* offers several other clues to be considered. In a story about the termination of the parade, the following reasons were set forth. (1) The idea of parading was old and antiquated. (2) The parade hindered business and traffic. (3) The liability of delay and late arrivals meant that the parade crowds often had to wait past the advertised parade starting time. (4) The parade demoralized the attendance at schools. Certainly these first four reasons can be discarded as illegitimate as they would have been of very little consequence to any showman of the day.

Judging from the experience of the 1903 and 1904 seasons, the next four reasons stated in the *Realm* were

**The Phoenecian Galley in Brockton, Mass., July 20, 1903. This is one of a number of photographs taken by Frederick Glasier in his home town.**

probable factors playing in the decision to discontinue the parade. (5) Late parades meant late shows and a loss of money to the circus. (6) Without the parade, the workers' efforts could be concentrated on erecting the show. (7) The railroads could not efficiently handle large numbers of show cars and the extra parade equipment added to the burden by requiring additional flatcars. (8) The street parade exhausted the horses, elephants, and showpeople.<sup>22</sup>

Another factor to be considered is the "gentlemen's agreement" that was reached between the Ringlings and Bailey, to cooperate and coordinate the routing of their shows. This followed the January 10, 1905 auction of Adam Forepaugh & Sells Bros. Cir-

**The Europe continental wagon built for the 1903 parade was not used in 1904. With riders aboard it is ready for a 1903 parade.**



cus, which culminated in Bailey's purchase of the show and his subsequent "rigged" sale<sup>23</sup> of one half interest in that circus to the Ringling Bros. Logically, this agreement contributed toward the elimination of the need for Bailey's competitively large parade.

A multiplicity of reasons including railroad expenses, custom duties, narrow streets and the thesis that the free street parade was hurting ticket sales<sup>24</sup> (disputed by accounts in *Barnum & Bailey In The Old World 1897-1901* route book) are thought to have played in the decision to terminate Barnum & Bailey's European street parade in October of 1900. Bailey may have been influenced by the European experience even though no evidence has been found to suggest that Bailey's "triumphant return parade" did anything but enhance business in the United States. It is doubtful that he believed the parade was keeping people away from the ticket wagons, however, he may have determined that the advertising requirement of a street pageant had become marginal.

Perhaps the growth of metropolitan areas meant that patrons were not traveling such great distances to the circus as they were in the early days of railroad excursions. Maybe the observed urbanization of Europe and the recognition of the same trend occurring in the Eastern areas of the United States, swayed Bailey.<sup>25</sup> Despite the fact that on a nationwide basis excursions were still at the peak of popularity,<sup>26</sup> Bailey may have rationalized that the parade was no longer the required magnet that it had been thought to be for over 30 years.

Or perhaps the parade had simply become a giant albatross and Bailey dismantled it to rid himself of a great burden that he had created.

The wisdom of Bailey's decision can



be debated. On the one hand there is the report of a business slump coinciding with the absence of the parade, and the fact that the Ringlings were quick to restore the parade as soon as they were able. On the other hand, the need for streamlining the Barnum & Bailey Circus was seen by all, and the elimination of the parade was a step toward that end.

Otto Ringling immediately recognized the problems caused by the extreme weight of Barnum & Bailey's equipment when he took charge,<sup>27</sup> and he seriously considered abandoning the Two Hemispheres permanently. Nevertheless, this massive bandwagon was utilized on Barnum & Bailey from 1908 through 1918. In fact, at least ten of the thirteen so-called "non-functional" 1903 Sebastian wagons were taken out of storage and paraded regularly by the Ringlings. It was not until about 1917 that the four continental floats were built up to carry cargo.

Perhaps the real significance of Bailey's last parade lies in the fact that its content almost totally represented the influence of an earlier era of parading history, and it provided one of the last good views of that marvelous parading era of elegant bandchariots, light narrow cages, telescoping tableaux, and exotic theme floats.

The great emphasis on parade wagon construction well into the 1880's had been on a style of vehicle which lacked any utilitarian capability. Falling into this category were not only the calliopes, bell wagons, pony floats, and shell bandwagons, but also the tableau features. Wagons like Forepaugh's Five Graces, St. George & the Dragon, and Cleopatra's Barge; Barnum's Temple of Juno; the Golden Horse bandwagons, and Howes Great



The Our Country float carried riders dressed as Presidents of the United States.

London's Chariots of India and Commerce were not built to double as baggage wagons. Similarly, only six of the 38 wagons shown in the 1904 movie could conceivably have carried any baggage.

There are other examples of the earlier era's influence on Bailey's 1903-1904 parade too. He had the four continental telescopers built, while telescoping tableau wagons had begun to vanish in the 1870's with the innovation of circus rail transportation and with the appearance of more and more telephone and telegraph wires in the early 1880's.<sup>28</sup> However, Bailey's "modern" telescopers apparently did not pose any particular difficulties since they were much lower than those of earlier showmen.

By the turn of the century, the basic

This view of the Fairy Tales float was taken in the Bridgeport, Conn., winter quarters of the Barnum & Bailey show.



The *Realm* was the courier booklet put out by Barnum and Bailey from 1903 to 1906, and is one of the finest examples of the press agent's genius. The 1904 edition contained a section on the parade, describing each wagon in detail.

style of newly constructed parade vehicles had shifted. As the cost of flatcar loading space escalated, circus men had begun to economize physically on the design of their parade equipment. Bandwagons and tableaux were built in more of a box-like manner so that they could accommodate a load. Cages were widened and reduced in number to better utilize the deck space on railroad flatcars. Bailey's old shell bandchariots, cages, and twelve tableau-dens were beautiful, but not fashionable.

His shining star, or "Bailey's Folly?" While the debate over this issue will go on, there is no question (regardless of his motives) that Bailey pioneered the discontinuance of the



horse-drawn circus street parade. Although he may have been ahead of his time in that respect, it was not too many years before the Ringling Bros. followed his lead and Bailey's action became a trend.

A version of this paper was presented at the 1982 Circus Historical Society convention.

1. This circus was titled variously as P. T. Barnum's 1871-1880, Barnum & London 1881-1888, and Barnum & Bailey 1889-1918.
2. Richard E. Conover, "Historical Sketches of American Parade Wagons," (unpublished work, 1962).
3. The King of Babylon Float has often been referred to as King Neptune's Float in error. Its theme had nothing to do with the god of the sea.
4. *Billboard*, May 16, 1903, p. 7.
5. The original invoice and the receipts for payment dated April 1, 1903 for the Bode wagons are in the Circus World Museum. Correspondence and invoices for the Milwaukee Ornamental Carving Co. wagons are in the Fred D. Pfening III collection, Columbus, Ohio.
6. George L. Chindahl, *A History of the Circus In America* (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1959), p. 144.
7. *Billboard*, May 23, 1903, p. 9.
8. *Ibid.*, May 30, 1903, p. 9.
9. *New York Clipper*, July 4, 1903, p. 438.
10. *Billboard*, June 13, 1903, p. 7.
11. C. G. Sturtevant, "Circus Transportation," *Banner Line*, Oct. 1, 1952, p. 6.
12. Charles Andress, *Day By Day With Barnum & Bailey*, route book (By the Author, 1904), p. 69.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
14. *Waterloo Times Tribune*, August 12, 1904, p. 3.
15. For historical background about the origin of these twelve ca. 1883 tableau-dens, see: Richard E. Conover, *The Fielding Band-chariots*, (Xenia, Ohio: By the Author, 1969), pp. 52-56.
16. see: Fred D. Pfening, III, "The Orchestmelchor Wagon and Its Origins," *Bandwagon*, Nov.-Dec., 1972, pp. 22-24.
17. see: Fred (Rick) Pfening, "Some Interesting Lithos from the P. M. McClintock Collection," *Bandwagon*, Mar.-Apr., 1965, p. 14.
18. see: Fred D. Pfening, Jr. and Richard E. Conover, "Pictorial Encyclopedia of Circus Parade Wagons," *Bandwagon*, Nov.-Dec. 1969, p. 16.
19. This evidence includes the classic set of pictures of the parade assembling on the lot in Chester, England on October 10, 1898 and a lineup of the first British parade that was recorded in the April 10, 1898 edition of the *Manchester Empire* reprinted in *Banner Line*, Dec. 1, 1958, p. 9.
20. *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, October 2, 1904.
21. Stuart Thayer has pointed out that the parade orders of many large circuses were firmly dictated by loading orders, menagerie lineups,



Funny Folks carried two clowns and a person in an ape costume. The young boy and other men were along for the ride.



Most of the cages used by Barnum and Bailey were plain, utilitarian vehicles like the one shown in this clip from the Waterloo film.

and the time frame of erecting and moving the show - as well as advertising impact and eye appeal.

22. "No Parade!" *The Realm*, 1905, pp. 45-47.
23. Richard E. Conover, *The Affairs of James A. Bailey*, (Xenia, Ohio: By the Author, 1957), p. 16.
24. Jake Posey, *Last of the Forty-Horse Drivers*, (New York: Vantage Press, 1959), p. 49.
25. Richard Flint suggested this though.
26. Tom Parkinson & Charles Philip Fox, *The Cir-*

*cus Moves By Rail*, (Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Company, 1978), p. 236.

27. Otto Ringling, personal letter, October 12, 1907 cited by Charles Philip Fox, *A Ticket To The Circus*, (Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1959), p. 165.
28. Otto Ringling, personal letter cited by Richard E. Conover, "Notes On The Barnum & Bailey Show," *Bandwagon*, March-April, 1959, p. 3.
29. C. H. Amidon, "A History of Circus Parades In America," *White Tops*, May-June, 1976, p. 43.





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# I HAD TO JOIN THE CIRCUS

By Kenneth D. Hull

My wife Edris and I arrived in Los Angeles in 1936, and we were aware that the Al G. Barnes Circus was quartered near by. Edris found work as a professional model for a local dress manufacturer, and I entered the hotel business getting a job as a front desk clerk. To find work of any kind required some doing back then, and we appeared to be pretty well set. But I had the circus bug. Some years before I had spent six summers working in a small amusement park back in Grant City, Missouri, and during the summers the park would book circus acts. I met a lot of show people that way. A high wire act called Rita and Dunn was there one summer. The Flying Floyds, also played the park as did the Dutton Society Circus which carried a bareback act and some trained bears. One entire summer three bulls from the Hall Farm over at Lancaster, Missouri were booked. Mr. Hall had more elephants on hand than he could place so these three bulls, named George, Juno, and Kate, were sent to the park along with two hands, Joe Metcalf and George Stretch coming along as his helper. I know the act did not get much as times were so poor, but I do know the two men got a salary and the bulls got fed.

Metcalf was some fellow with the ladies and he did a good job with the bottle. Many times I knew that Stretch was concerned because he feared the bulls might decide to take off or get into other trouble when Joe was away or hurting from the effects of the lush. The elephants were only about half grown and all very full of life. Stretch seemed to be an expert with horses, but this was his first venture out with elephants.

Metcalf had been boss bull man on several shows and what stories he could tell! I spent hours talking to him and other troupers, and something inside me told me way back then that one day I was going to join the circus and see what the life was really like. I felt it had to be wonderful moving with a show nearly every day and somehow I was going to do it.

In the spring of 1937 we caught the Barnes show out on the Wilshire lot which was then called the Hollywood lot. We did not know a soul on the show, of course, but realized it looked good to us. As the season was on we left well enough alone. I can assure you, however, that I was really thinking circus at that point.

During the winter of 1937-1938 we went down to the Main Street Station



The Al G. Barnes Circus winter quarters office during the final days in Baldwin Park, Ca., were in this rail car that had been placed on blocks. The private car had been purchased by Al G. Barnes from a California industrialist in the 1920s and had not been used following the Ringling purchase of the show. It was painted green. When the quarters were closed the car was moved to a deserted wrecking yard. Burt Wilson Collection.

one day and caught a big red inter-urban car for Baldwin Park for our first visit. There was a little sign saying Baldwin Park and across the street was a big wire and steel gate which was the entrance to the circus winter quarters. A grumpy working man allowed us to enter and pointed to the office, which was an old private car painted green and sitting on high cement blocks. We stepped on the back vestibule and knocked. A gruff voice told us to come in. Two men were tending to office duties and they both looked us over, but neither was on the friendly side. We inquired about work on the show and were told there was nothing to be had, and we were kicked off. They did mention the circus had a new manager by the name of Austin and that he could be

found at the Clark Hotel, located in downtown Los Angeles. We did not tarry around the quarters but got back to Los Angeles hoping to catch the new manager. It required several attempts to find him.

Ben Austin, usually called J.B., was reading a newspaper when we finally got to see him, and he did not exactly welcome us with open arms. We introduced ourselves and stated our desire to join the circus. He looked us over while continuing to read his paper, and explained that he had been sent to manage the Barnes show, a position he really wasn't interested in, and said he was certain there would not be a thing for us to do on the show as most positions had been filled. We kept talking or at least trying to, when at last he said to my wife, "Go back out to quarters and see Bob Thornton." In a few days we went back out to see Thornton, who was the equestrian director.

Thornton had Edris see Jack Joyce, a horse trainer and a good one. He had Edris try to ride and she must have done all right as he assigned her to a big male horse named Spangles that the other girls were afraid of. Edris took old Spangles under control right off. She got to love that steed, and learned more and more about riding. Later on she was instructed in swinging ladders by a former acrobat and clown and she got the feeling the show

This view of the Baldwin Park quarters shows the wire fence that enclosed the grounds. Burt Wilson Collection.





was going to use her. Nothing was mentioned by anyone if I was going to join the show. Every Monday, my day off, I would go out to quarters hoping to learn the show had something for me to do. As I recall one day someone said I might be placed in the light department, which didn't sound like much to me.

When I lived in Missouri, I had seen many of the big circuses, shows like Sells-Floto, Robbins Bros., Ringling-Barnum, Hagenbeck-Wallace, and John Robinson, and had a fair idea how a circus was supposed to look and what jobs had to be done so the show would function properly. To my knowledge, Edris had never seen a circus until we got to California, but she was getting along famously learning more and more with the passing of each day. The weather was wet and cold most days, but activity continued in all parts of the quarters. One day Edris came running into the hotel to inform me that she had been one of the three new girls asked to work the elephants.

could be heard for a great distance. He swore and carried on, but as I was later to learn, he was one of the best in the business. I was beginning to get the feeling that Edris could do about anything on the circus when it came to performing.

January and February were fast going past and still I had nothing to do with the circus. Every Monday I would return to the quarters hoping that soon someone would say I had been hired. I still retained my job, but Edris had quit hers as she was now working on the different parts of the performance every day. The quarters was a beehive of activity. The big draft teams were busy pulling heavy wagons all over the place, equipment was being painted everywhere one looked. One day I watched as the big top was spread out on the ground, after which men walked all over it with sprinklers spraying a mixture of paraffin and gasoline to make the canvas waterproof. The gasoline evaporated in time and this treatment gave

the 26th of March. I was still clerking at the hotel.

I, of course, do not know the exact date it happened, but on one Monday someone came to me and said I was wanted in the office. I got over there in a hurry. Robertson told me I was going to be hired to run a tax box. I was elated. We were going on the road with a big rail circus. At the time I was not at all certain just what running a tax box entailed, but as I walked around the quarters many different old time show people told me how lucky I was to get that job, and wanted to know who I knew in the business.

Presently I found out that another fellow, Bill Lennet, was to operate the second tax box. One box was used for the general admission passes while the other was for the reserved seat passes. It seems the two former tax box men had become too rich operating them. Robertson had been sent out from Sarasota to try and clean up the Barnes show. These problems were the reason the Ringling-owned show had a new manager and several other new faces. George Smith was going to be the manager but the show called him back to Sarasota and sent Austin to fill the head position. I gave notice at the hotel and we moved to Baldwin Park to be ready to load and leave. At this time Edris was prepared to work elephants, ride manege, do swinging ladders, be in the statue act and then dance in the concert. She purchased a trunk and several pairs of boots. In those days, the circus did not provide every piece of dress for the performers.

One day the big top went into the air and a rehearsal or two was held. I was amazed at how well the circus band sounded the first time they played together. Eddie Woeckener headed the band and all the men were experienced members of the organization. The spec was run through a few times. This was about it for rehearsals in winter quarters. I was amazed at the number of Hollywood movie people who came out to quarters to observe all that was going on. Many were quite well known. Wallace Beery was a regular.

We were assigned to a sleeper, car #41, the third best on the train. We were hooked two cars forward from the private car #39. Riding in our car were people like Mabel Stark, the tiger trainer, Walter McClain, the boss bull man, and George Tipton, the cook house steward. Our berth was an upper and we rode over Mr. and Mrs. John White, horse and dog trainers. Across from us in an upper berth were Josephine the snake charmer and one of the hula girls from the side show. I was told there were around seventy people in our car, so we were a bit crowded. But it was nothing like in the other cars. Car #42, just ahead of



**Walter McClain was boss elephant man on Barnes in 1938. He is shown here that year with his elephant handlers and three of his charges. McClain is on the right in the white shirt. Burt Wilson Collection.**

I suppose it was the following Monday, my day off, that I went out to watch Edris with her elephants. The show had a permanent ring barn which had real shavings and a ring inside. The bulls had a regulation ring surrounded with a canvas side wall which was no more than three feet from the ring curbs. All at once the loud canned music was turned on and five huge elephants came charging along with the boss bull man, Walter McClain, my wife, and couple of helpers. The flying dust made me aware that I was seated mighty close to all the action. I didn't know what to think seeing my wife in there with all those big bulls, but I did know I was so proud of her. She seemed to really be doing well. Walter McClain was rough and gave his commands so they

the huge canvas spread body. Animals were being rehearsed and people were working out all over the place. By now I knew the two men in the office were Theo Forstall and Ike Robertson, and they knew who I was. They were still not friendly with me. By this time Edris was having her picture taken nearly every day. Bob Wallace was the show photographer and was well known for his work from his connection with *Pic* magazine. Both of us were convinced that Edris would leave town with the circus, and we were told the show would open in San Diego on





Edris Hull is shown on an elephant that she appeared in the big show with in ring one of the big elephant number. Diane Lovett and Evelyn Burns worked the other rings. Burt Wilson Collection.

us, had all three high bunks and slept many of the band members, ticket sellers, ushers and clowns, all sleeping two to a berth. Now this is what you call being crowded. In fact, to my knowledge, few shows were ever more heavily loaded all the way through than Barnes in 1938.

Two days before the opening in San Diego, the show loaded out. A few of the black bears in the menagerie were about the toughest animals to get out of their winter cages and into the cage wagon they were to ride in all summer. Lotus, the big hippo, had a fine cement tank while in quarters, but she moved right out and up and into her big cage wagon as if she was pleased to be going on the road again.

The show had many capable bosses so there were few problems getting loaded and set to leave. The tracks were located right across the road from the winter quarters gate and as soon as all was loaded a Pacific Electric engine was hooked to the train and we moved out rolling slowly on to the main line heading toward Los Angeles. Evening was just coming on. It was night when we discovered that we were in the Los Angeles rail yard being switched to the Santa Fe for the trip down the coast to San Diego. There were twenty-nine cars back on the show and the advance car had been sent on ahead some two weeks previous.

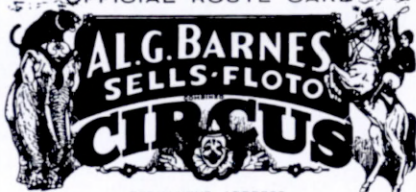
We were thrilled to be aboard this long train and to feel that now we were a part of this big traveling cir-

cus. The train arrived in San Diego early and unloaded and set up with ease. It was sunny but windy and quite cool. The lot was near the cars, but right down on the waterfront. Some of the new teams gave the drivers trouble. In the afternoon the show held a rehearsal and that night a dress rehearsal for the handicapped. All was set for the circus to open the next afternoon.

Bill Lennet, who was to run a tax box along with me, had been a former bar performer and did not know any more about what we were supposed to do than I did. For some reason, I received the general admission box while Lennet got the reserved seat box. The box I operated collected fifteen cents tax and service charge while Lennet received twenty-five cents for the reserved seat passes tax and service charge. Eddie Delavan was the superintendent of the front door and he was a gentleman in all ways. He never told us too much about our duties, but did say for us to stay ahead of it. Now we were not quite sure we knew what he meant, but we had a good idea. A short time before the doors were to open we would report to the red wagons and receive our cash boxes containing twenty-five dollars in change plus the stamp and the rubber pad used to stamp the passes "Paid." The tax boxes were exactly like the ones used in front of the side show and each held a sign overhead stating all passes had to pay tax and service charge. For uniforms we wore only a cap and a dark red coat that I guess made us look as though we belonged to the show. All passes, along with the tickets taken in, had to be sorted and counted at the front door. When the head man told you to close down, you turned in your money

The two tax boxes placed in front of the marquee. The author started his circus career on a tax box on Barnes in 1938. Burt Wilson Collection.



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| Mar. 27   | San Diego, Cal.       |                |       |  |
| FIRST WEEK  |                       |                |       |  |
| Mar. 28   | Inglewood, Cal.       | A.T.&S.P.      | 134   |  |
| Mar. 30   | Santa Ana, Cal.       | A.T.&S.F.      | 42    |  |
| Mar. 30   | Pomona, Cal.          | S.P.           | 42    |  |
| Mar. 31   | Pasadena, Cal.        | S.P.           | 68    |  |
| Apr. 1  | Huntington Park, Cal. | S.P.-U.P.      | 26    |  |
| Apr. 2  | Long Beach, Cal.      | U.P.-S.P.      | 30    |  |
| Apr. 3  | Long Beach, Cal.      |                |       |  |
| SECOND WEEK   |                       |                |       |  |
| Apr. 4  | Los Angeles, Cal.     | S.P.           | 22    |  |
| Apr. 5  | Los Angeles, Cal.     |                |       |  |
| Apr. 6  | Los Angeles, Cal.     | (Hill and      |       |  |
| Apr. 7  | Los Angeles, Cal.     | Washington     |       |  |
| Apr. 8  | Los Angeles, Cal.     | Sts.)          |       |  |
| Apr. 9  | Los Angeles, Cal.     |                |       |  |
| Apr. 10   | Los Angeles, Cal.     |                |       |  |
| Miles to Date   |                       |                | 458   |  |
| Eddie Woockener, Mail Agent   |                       |                |       |  |

The opening route card of the Al. G. Barnes-Sells-Floto Circus listed the first circus days of author Kenneth Hull. Pfening Collection.

and cash boxes to the red wagon. You never knew how you stood until the next performance when you went to pick up your box again, and the men in the wagon told you if you were long or short. If you were short you had to make up the difference, which is why Delevan insisted we stay ahead. Whatever count the front door turned into the wagon we had to have the money for this in those cash boxes. This system was fine for the show, but could be rough on the tax men's pocketbooks. You see, day after day, the front door ticket takers would





The Rieffenach riding act was featured on the Barnes show in 1938 and remained on the show after the Ringling-Barnum features were added. Tom Parkinson photo.

palm or steal a few passes to have when they got to a big city where they had friends or could sell them so on those days the count would be short and the money long. Reverse this when they got rid of the passes they had taken, and we tax box men would come up short and had to kick in money to the red wagon. Because of the fifteen cent charge on the general admission pass, my box was the best one. The customers were so eager to get their pass stamped and rush into the show that many times they would leave me coins. I gave them their correct change but in their rush they would go off leaving a dime or a quarter or more right there on top of the high box. They seldom were aware of this so when after being out for only a week I discovered I had over fifty dollars that had just come to me. I had not stolen a dime. Since I was on a salary of eighteen dollars a week, this made my job a good one.

At night, during the tear down, the tax men had to go in and hand up the folding reserved seat chairs to ushers stacking them in the chair wagons. The inside ticket sellers were held until the show was tearing down, and they had to roll up one of the big top middle pieces. Everybody did double and triple duty.

Sometime during the first week the time keeper learned I could help him

in the mornings, which I did, furthering my circus education. Sam Thompson was the show time keeper and worked in the white ticket wagon up in the front end. The reserved seat tickets were sold out the back window of this same wagon and at night the side show performers' trunks were loaded into this wagon. Social security had recently gone into effect, and it was surprising to learn that so many of the working men had only a name they went by and even that might not have any connection with their real one. We had men named Pony Jim, Peanuts Robertson, and one man was just called Heavy and for some this was the only name they knew. Others would come up with their real names to get a social security card. All the shows back in those days had some real characters around them who would come and go and yet many made the season year after year.

Edris Hull appeared in the concert with the other ladies on the show. She is shown here, tenth from the left, in a photo taken in Revelstoke, B.C., on June 4, 1938. Burt Wilson Collection.



Edris Hull worked in the statue act during the early days of the 1938 Barnes season. Mrs. Hull is shown on the right holding a discus. Kenneth Hull collection.

After working with the time keeper a few days I was sent to the commissary wagon, spotted as a rule right at the entrance to the cook house marquee. Here we sold items like cigarettes, chewing tobacco, candy, gloves, underwear, shirts and the like and the time keeper had a good thing going as he and the man in the commissary wagon had a week's hold back for all working men so they could charge items needed. Sometimes they borrowed money from the time keeper. We never had to worry about a working man blowing the show as we had most of the money the man had coming. Working men could borrow five dollars, but only got four and had to pay back the five. On most shows, lots of employees had some gimmick like this to make money. The tractor drivers got a tip from the performers for filling their water buckets. We had to tip our cook house waiter one dollar a week, and the car porter received the same amount. I could go on and on about how different members of the show added to their income.

After that first week on the road the show moved into Los Angeles for a week's stand, and while there I was moved into the red ticket wagon working with the same two men who I had first seen out at quarters in that old green office car. I only worked in this wagon during the mornings, and continued my tax box duties both afternoon and night. I was told I was going to remain in the wagon, and would end my tax duties at the close of this stand. I was thankful for this as it was





so much cleaner and warmer inside the wagon. Plus, I was now right in the heart of the circus and able to know about everything that was going on. Both Forstall and Robertson were good to me and helped me in every way possible. A little at a time, I picked up the routine. On the Barnes show this wagon was used to store the two tax boxes and the front door cash register as well as the uniforms for the tax men and the front door ticket takers. Every day we went to work as soon as the wagon was spotted on the lot and swept out. Bills had to be paid. Payrolls had to be made up. Route cards had to be mailed to supply houses and other shows. There was never an end to the work in this wagon. We might be at work at nine in the morning and it was about nine at night when we got to close at night so the wagon could be covered with its tarp and made ready to move to the runs. My last chore of the day was to give Paul Eagles a paper telling what the day's take had been or near to what it would be. Eagles was the business manager of the circus and seemed to do most of the running of the show as Austin spent most of his time down at the train in the private car. Eagles had operated a hay and

This photo of Edris Hull, on right, was taken in winter quarters in the spring of 1938. Burt Wilson Collection.

grain feed store in Los Angeles and was quite a circus fan. He sold animal feed to every show that came to the west coast. he did a good job for the show.

I learned that the circus did not pay for its rail move every day. The Barnes show often moved on the Pacific Electric and the Southern Pacific railroads, and would make big payments when the money was rolling in. They left quarters owing for items like paint, wood, feed and other supplies, but the merchants had been doing business with the show for years and knew they would eventually get their money. I learned to make up money as it was coming in. A ticket seller, candy stand man, or anyone else handling cash who did not have all of his paper money faced the same way or who handed in only a few coins was fired. Out West, silver was about all the show took in. Silver is very heavy and when possible the wagon wanted

The Barnes side show continued to be used after the Ringling-Barnum features were added. Eddie Jackson photo.



paper and wanted it to come in with the corners of the bills all flattened out and facing the same way. The show dealt only in cash and it all came in fast in a short period of time, so it had to be handled just a certain way.

On Barnes most of the money was taken to the train at night and kept in the pie car. I recall that in some cities, San Francisco for example, the police would come around and offer protection for the show in moving the day's take back to the train. I used to take the show's money in a shoe box by cab or even street car to the train. The police guarded the show Packard go-



Terrell Jacobs and Mable Stark had worked together on the Barnes show in 1936, and were reunited in 1938 when Jacobs came with the Ringling acts. Pfening Collection.

ing back to the train, but it did not carry the money as the show people did not trust the city police in some towns.

It has been forty-four years since I had this wonderful life on the Barnes show. It was hard work, but it was fun, and I loved it. Edris hated it except for the time she was performing. She loved all the animals and liked a lot of the people. I am still amazed that we two first of Mays got to do all the things we did that year. It was something I will never forget.



# The 1982 Circus Historical Society Convention

The CHS held its annual convention in Washington, D.C. 21-25 April, making its first eastern swing since 1974. The program was the fullest and most varied in years, partially the result of fortuitous day and dating with the Smithsonian Institution's Spring Celebration.

It was a circus film addict's paradise as movies were shown every day, both at the convention headquarters in the Marriott Hotel in Arlington, Virginia, and in the auditorium at the Smithsonian's Museum of American History. Included were a number of fine old films of the 101 Ranch show, Ringling-Barnum, and the Tom Mix Circus. More recent offerings of the Sarasota quarters, European shows, and Christiani and other American circuses were shown. George C. Bingaman was the major motion picture purveyor, and the unofficial projectionist.

Many professionally made films were screened. Among them was a 1963 NET film entitled "Bears, Bulls and Chimps," featuring Bill Woodcock Sr. Many attendees were moved to see and hear Woodcock on film because of his important role as a student and teacher of circus history. A number of circus related newsreels from the 1930's, a Will Rogers roping movie, and the famous Project 20 film narrated by Emmett Kelly were some of the others enjoyed.

Good things came in small packages as a four and half minute movie stole the show. It was an exceptionally clear film of virtually the entire Barnum and Bailey parade made in 1904. This remarkable document had its first public showing in Washington, accompanying Greg Parkinson's presentation. He had thoroughly analyzed the film and other materials relating to the 1903-1904 Barnum show parade, and gave a dramatic presentation using a split screen showing still photos of the wagons as they passed by on the moving picture.

There were activities every day at the Smithsonian. The Spring Celebration featured a one ring circus, a side show, a banner painting exhibition, a model wagon building demonstration, a steam and an air calliope, a wild west show, a clown alley, and many other presentations. John Herriott, Ward Hall, Herb Head, Gordon Carver, Bill Ballantine, and other friends of the CHS participated in these shows.

The travelling art exhibition "Center Ring: The Artist" was in town during the meetings. Unfortunately, the curators of the Corcoran Gallery, the show's host, did not exhibit all the artifacts or works of art that appeared in Milwaukee a year ago.

A special treat for the members who were able to go was the opportunity to view the Library of Congress' collection of circus posters. This significant holding contains what is probably the largest collection of lithographs printed by the Courier Company of Buffalo, New York, and includes many unique examples of John Robinson, Great Wallace, Ringling, and other turn of the century shows' art. Elena Millie, the poster curator, was most gracious in showing the Library's rare circus bills.

As in the past, a number of papers were given. From the scholarly to the amusing, from the early 19th century to last winter, from Poland to Australia, the thirteen presentations touched upon a broader range of topics than sessions in past years. A number of papers were by non-member academics, indicative of the growing professional interest in the circus as a legitimate area of inquiry. They were as follow: "Dressage Riding in the 19th Century Circus," by Ellen Wells; "The WPA Circus, 1935-1939," by Jeanne S. Burch; "Center Ring: the Exhibit," by John S. Still, which showed slides of the Corcoran show while at the New York State Museum where Still is curator; "Felice Navidad: Christmas Season Circuses in Mexico City," by William T. Randolph; "Notes on the American Circus Corporation," by Leonard V. Farley; "Poetry of the Pitchman," by Steve and Amanda Zeitlin; "Tipito Sultan," by Stuart Thayer which detailed the career of one of this country's first elephants; "The 1905 McCaddon Show," by John Polacsek; "Microcomputer Data Base for Circus Routes," by James Stegall which ex-

plored the possibilities of the computer as a tool in circus research; "The Wild West Show," by Frank Dean; "The Polish State Circus School," by Christopher Knop; "A Juggling Workshop," by a group of local jugglers; and the aforementioned "Barnum & Bailey 'Triumphant Return' Parades, 1903-1904," by Greg Parkinson. Many of these papers will appear in this and future issues of *Bandwagon*.

The banquet was masterfully emceed by John Herriott who introduced the feature speaker, Bill Ballantine. Ballantine discussed his new book *Clown Alley* in which he reviews his years as dean of the Ringling-Barnum clown college. An excellent speaker, he mesmerized the over 100 in attendance with his tales of training funny men and women for the Greatest Show on Earth. As the concert feature, Herriott recited two of his poems, which doubtless will further enhance his reputation as the circus's poet laureate. It was a wonderful evening, full of fellowship and good cheer.

Every show needs a blow off, and we had a great one on Sunday afternoon when the National Concert Band blared out the classics of Karl King, Henry Fillmore, and other great circus composers. It was a fine and fitting ending to the 1982 convention.

One of the main attraction—if not the main attraction—of any gathering of this sort is the visiting among members. I was pleased to renew friendships with many of my old pals, and meet others who share this rare obsession. In fact, my one regret is that I didn't have enough time to visit with everyone I wanted to. Nevertheless, it was a most pleasant five days out of the real world, and much of the credit for that goes to CHS president Richard W. Flint, who planned the convention and acted as its chairman. He will have to go some to top himself next year.

Fred D. Pfening III

CHS officers and speakers at the banquet are left to right; Richard W. Flint, President; Fred D. Pfening III, Vice President; Bill Ballantine; John Herriott; Ward Hall and Fred D. Pfening, Jr., *Bandwagon* Editor.





# THE CLARKE FAMILY: CHAMPION JOCKEY RIDERS OF THE WORLD AND TRAPEZE ARTISTS EXTRAORDINARY

by Antony Hippisley Cox

## Part II

Christmas 1888 found Augustus Alfred Clarke (who hated the name Augustus, and, adding much to a circus historian's perplexity, persisted in calling himself Alfred, as did both his son and grandson) at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, where Hengler's Grand Circus Company opened on Boxing Day. With him was his daughter, Annie, then 17 years old. There were twelve other "Lady Equestrians" in the bill, and eight "Gentlemen Equestrians," including Henry Boswell, Tom Yelding, John Watson, and Washington Myers, all of whom were, according to the programme, appearing in London for the first time. The Balaguer Troupe and the Alegria Family (four young women) provided the acrobats and gymnasts, while the clowning was in the hands of Whimsical Walker, Little Friskey, Little Valdo, and Frank Anderson. An equestrian bear called Caviar, some kangaroos and George Lockhart's elephants made up the animal acts.

While father and daughter worked with Hengler at Covent Garden, John Frederick, then 19 years old, and Master Charles, aged 13, were appearing with Hengler in Glasgow. Master Charles appeared twice during the course of the programme, fifth on the

bill in his "pleasing and daring scene of riding and leaping bars, gates, etc.," and in the final act, "The Pony Post, riding and driving six ponies." John Frederick is described as "The Greatest Rider and Somersault Thrower in the World." Billing is often an idle boast, but even those whose families might well consider that they had a claim to the title—such as Douglas Cook—have told me that, in their opinion, John Frederick Clarke was, without doubt, the greatest circus rider the world has ever seen. Certainly Albert Hengler held him in high regard. In 1894 he was asked who were the best English "Lady and Gentlemen riders." In the former category he put Jenny O'Brien, Marguerite Doris, Florence Godfrey, Ernestine Cooke, Amalia Jee and Annie Clarke. "But amongst the men," he said, "there is one who stands far ahead and clear of all the others, and that is John Frederick

Powell & Clark's Paragon Circus in Ireland. This photo is obviously a montage, as the wagons behind the tent, and the people standing near them, are larger than those in front of the tent. It also looks as if some of the wagons are duplicates. However, it provides interesting information about the circus and its equipment at this period.

Clarke, a man who can do as much tumbling upon a horse's back as other men can do upon the ground."

In the same bill at Glasgow were Miss Lena and George Batty, old friends of the Clarkes. George was appearing as a jockey rider and Lena was presenting a trotting act. From the notes written on the back of the photographs in my possession, it would appear that Mrs. Foottit married a Batty, after the death of George Foottit, who, it will be remembered, was once a partner of Clarke and Powell, and Mrs. Foottit's daughter Lena married George Batty, who, I believe, became the favourite jockey rider of the Prince of Wales and was given royal permission to wear Prince Edward's racing colours for his act.

That Boxing Day, Augustus Alfred's eldest son, Alfred John, then aged 20, left England to take up an engagement with Renz's Circus in Vienna. But for some reason this came to nothing. Perhaps his own horse died; we know that Renz tried to persuade him to ride one of the horses belonging to the establishment, and that Alfred refused. He returned home and joined Sanger at Astley's Amphitheatre on January 21st, 1889. He still had a warm regard for George Ginnett, with whom he had travelled and who had brought up his wife; so when he heard that "Gentleman George" was opening his show at Petersfield on March 3rd, he asked Sanger for a few days leave of absence so he could go and lend a hand. He journeyed with Ginnett from Petersfield to Alton and on to Basingstoke, before returning to Sanger on Thursday, March 6th.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Irish Sea, Powell and Clarke set out on their 16th Annual Tour. The Powells seem to have been represented by Minnie Powell, who appeared in two riding acts. The Clarkes, on the other hand, in spite of at least two of the family being away, still contribute a major portion of the programme. Miss Annie appears in two riding acts, and Charles tumbles on horseback. (This I feel sure must be Charles Augustus, and not Charles, afterwards of the Clarkonians, or his son Charles F. who would have been no more than 12





at the time. Alfred (Augustus) Clarke, then 47 years old, presented The Union of Nations and played Dick Turpin in The Famous Ride to York. There are more animals in the bill this year: an equestrian bear (like Caviar, who had appeared on the same bill at Covent Garden), Siberian wolves, Juno, the elephant, performing greyhounds and kangaroos from South Australia.

Back in England Lord George Sanger's Circus was working up towards Scotland, continuing its series of one-day stands. The programme was as follows:

1. SELECTION BY THE BAND, under the Direction of Mr. CLEMETT (sic).
2. HARRY THE AFRICAN will ride, drive and manage one, two, three and four magnificently trained Horses.
3. GEORGE HOLLOWAY, the great American artiste, in his marvellous performance on the single wire.
4. BLACK EAGLE, trained and introduced by Lord George Sanger. This animal is of the North Friezeland (sic) breed.
5. FLAT RACE Gentlemen.
6. THE JUVENILE ARTISTES of Lord George Sanger's Great Circus. These beautiful children, five in number, and their tutor Mr. JOSEPH CRASTON, the six riding at the same time two highly trained horses specially broken for this performance. Not to be seen at any other Establishment.
7. THE JUVENILE EQUESTRIENNES with their Twin Ponies, introducing the game of "See-saw," and terminating with the Comic Entree of LITTLE GEORGE, the Droll.
8. The Great Spanish Equestrienne, Signoretta (sic) ALVAREZ.

The Queen's Jester,  
JAMES HOLLOWAY.

9. Miss GEORGINA and her beautiful thoroughbred horse, "Knight of the Garter," walking on his hind legs, carrying the lady across and around the arena and terminating by driving a tricycle. Never seen at any other Establishment.
10. The Great Trial of Skill by the principal Members of the Company. Batoute leaps, or French Vaulting, in which the Troupe will contend for the approbation and plaudits of the spectators.
11. Madlle PUNCHINELLO, the highly trained monkey.
12. The beautiful Fire Horse, KOHINOOR, trained to its present state of perfection in 18 days by Lord George Sanger.



Ginnett's Circus at some time during the last part of the 19th century. Unless otherwise noted, all photos are from the author's collection.

13. The Double Ladders, by the SANGER FAMILY.
14. GRAND PONY RACE.
15. GREAT ROMAN RACE, each Artiste standing on the bare backs of two Horses.
16. GRAND CHARIOT RACE.
17. The Wonderful Performing ELEPHANTS, 5 in number, introduced by FRED ORPWOOD.
18. JOSEPH CRASTON, the greatest of them all, in his Specialite (sic) Act, The Jockey; terminating by leaping from the ground into an erect position on the back of his Galloping Steed.
19. GEORGE HOLLOWAY, the Great American Artiste, in his Marvellous Performance on a single ladder. A feat never before attempted by any other artiste.
20. HENRIQUES LAPLACE and SIGNORETTA ALVAREZ, in their Marvellous Performance on the Double Traneze.
21. HARRY, the African, in his great Barebacked Hurdle and Steeplechase Act.
22. SIGNORETTA ISABELLE, the lovely and accomplished Somersault Act Rider, the only lady in the World at the present day performing the same feats. A challenge to the Profession for £5,000. Clown, the Great JAMES HOLLOWAY.
23. ALPINE CHARLIE and his Wonderful Kennel of Ravenous Wolves.
24. The exciting KANGAROO HUNT by six trained animals and a number of Australian natives in true costumes.
25. GORDON FRIENDLY ARABS.
26. Miss WASHINGTON SQUIRES and the Fiery Dragon.

27. Lord GEORGE SANGER'S grand and exciting Entertainment, "Scenes from the Far West," introducing Lord George Sanger's Buffalo Bill and Lord George Sanger's Cow Boys, and no connection with any other persons describing themselves as Buffalo Bill, either in London or the Provinces. The whole programme enlivened by the eccentricity of the drollest of the drolls, the ever-amusing AUGUST LAPLACE.
28. "GOD SAVE THE QUEEN"

NOTICE—Should any portion of this programme be departed from, or anything omitted, it will be from the awkward or dangerous state of the ground.

What superb affrontery to boast that Lord George Sanger's Buffalo Bill had no connection with even the real one! But where, one may ask, is Alfred John Clarke? The answer is that the rider was indulging in transvestism, and appeared in the ring as Signoretta Isabelle. The success of this disguise can be judged from the following letter, addressed to Miss Isabelle, Sanger's Circus, South Inch, Perth.

Bridge of Earn, N.B.  
21/6/89.

Madam,

Having seen your performance and being delighted and thoroughly satisfied with the same I should be exceedingly glad to make your acquaintance. If you acquiesce and allow me the pleasure of meeting you I would ask you kindly to meet me tomorrow Saturday at 6:30 p.m. just outside the General Post Office or (if you are in Town) on Sunday at The Fisher's Hut, North Inch 4 o'clock p.m. This is a most abrupt letter to address to a lady but if I be consistent I hope you may be



pleased to grant me the favour of an interview when particulars can be exchanged and assuring you that I have been prompted to write to you out the best of intentions on my part towards you—

With my compliments and good wishes,  
I am, believe me,  
Faithfully yours,  
F. Rudolf Kemp

P.S. I have appointed the time etc. myself only as time is limited for getting a reply from you. However I shall be pleased to hear from you first if you should prefer!

Whether Alfred kept that assignment or not I do not know, but while he was doubtless still chuckling at the success of his impersonation, his brother, John Frederick, was preparing for a much more auspicious occasion across the channel. At the Circus Hertzog, then standing on the Place de la Commune, Antwerp, a Gala Performance had been organized for the Shah of Persia.

On April 21st, *Der Artiste*, in reporting his act, listed all his movements, and from then on his repertoire is usually given in full in the programme, and sometimes on the posters and daybills, as at Metz where they opened on April 27th. With him on the Hertzog Circus were Robert Renz, Madame Renz and, working bareback, his old friend, Amalia Jee.

By December, Hertzog was advertising a 10,000 marks challenge to anyone who can beat him. That month Alfred joined him in Dresden, Sanger having finished his tenting season on November 30th. In January Alfred is billed as The English Jockey, and from the same poster we learn that Amalia has been joined by James Jee, and both are billed second only to John Frederick Clarke. Towards the end of January, 1890, this great rider had the following cards printed:

To the American and British residents of Dresden.

Tonight, Tuesday, January the 28th, being set apart for my BENEFIT,

I beg to solicit your patronage at the Circus Hertzog for which occasion a choice programme will be selected. I have the honour to remain,

Yours obediently,  
John Frederick Clarke

At the beginning of April, Hertzog closed in Dresden and opened in Leipzig. The Dunbar Brothers, Four Brothers Price and Charles Sheldon were in the programme, but John Frederick Clarke, of course, got top billing. Here the season ran from

April 6th to May 15th. Four days later they opened at Gorlitz. On June 2nd Alfred left for England, landing at Hull on Friday, June 6th. He made straight for Beverley, where George Ginnett's circus was then situated. If Gentleman George had offered him a job, we can be pretty sure that he would have taken it, but no work appears to have been forthcoming and the next day Alfred went to Darlington, where Charlie Clarke was presenting the Clarkonians (sic) at Rowland's Circus. This may well be the first appearance of this famous act. At this date Ernest would have been 13, Charles F. 11, and Percy 10 years old.

Here Alfred was taken on, starting to work on June 23rd at Hull. Since this may be the first appearance of the Clarkonians in public, it would be as well to give the whole bill.

ROWLAND'S  
NEW YORK CIRCUS  
Carr Lane, Hull

Monday, June 23rd, 1890.

Grand  
Change of Company

First Appearance of Mr. Alfred CLARKE, The Greatest Rider in the Universe.

First Appearance of Madlle Alice FONTAINBLEAU and her Troupe of Highly Trained PERFORMING DOGS including the best LEAPING HOUND known clearing a gate nine feet high.

First Appearance of Madlle LENA BATTY The Charming and Graceful Equestrienne

Great Success of the THREE CLARKONIONS. The Marvelous Midgits on the Flying Trapeze.

New Comic Sketches by the CLOWNS & GROTESQUES in conjunction with the Unrivalled Troupe of STAR ARTISTES form a Combination of Talent seldom if ever seen in any other establishment of the same kind.

*Special Notice.* For the convenience of Ladies and Families residing at a distance, there will be an ILLUMINATED PERFORMANCE EVERY SATURDAY AFTERNOON, Commencing at 2:30. Doors open at 2.

Open every evening at 7, Commence at 7:45.

Prices Reserved Chairs 2s. Balcony and Smoking Promenade 1s.

Gallery Sixpence  
Children under 10 Half-price.  
Half-price at 9 o'clock to 2s & 1s seats only.

Plan of reserved seats at Holder's Music Warehouse, Whitefriargate.

Business Agent and Architect  
..... Mr. George Weldon

Musical Director

..... Mr. T. Richardson  
Stud Groom..... Mr. Peak  
Sole Proprietor and Director

..... Mr. William Rowland

On Saturday, July 5th, the circus left for Jersey, in the Channel Islands, travelling via Southampton, and opening there on July 7th, which strikes one as being a remarkably quick move. A few weeks later Alfred signed a six-months contract with Rowland. It is written in long hand and reads as follows:

In the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety, the 21st day of August. Agreement made and entered into by and between William Rowland, Circus Proprietor, now of the Island of Jersey, of the one part, and Alfred John Clarke, now also of the said island, of the other part; witnesseth that for and in consideration of the said Alfred John Clarke consenting to abandon the engagement offered to him by Mr. Salamonski, a circus proprietor of Russia, the said William Rowland, hereby agrees to pay the said Alfred John Clarke a weekly salary of Ten Pounds sterling, the said Alfred John Clarke, engaging himself to become a member of the said William Rowland's Circus Troupe for the space and term of six calendar months to commence and be computed from the eighth day of September, one thousand eight hundred and ninety, and to finish at the expiration of the said term of six calendar months, under the following conditions, viz. That the said salary shall be paid regularly at the expiration of each week. That if at any time during the said six months the said salary shall be not regularly paid unto the said Alfred John Clarke by the said William Rowland, it will be optional and the said Alfred John Clarke to immediately cancel this present agreement. That this agreement be binding to both parties, under a penalty of Fifty Pounds sterling payable by the party refusing to fulfil its purport unto the party persisting. In witness whereof the said parties have signed these presents in duplicate the year month and day first above written in the presence of the undersigned witnesses.

Charles Clarke      Witnesses.  
Rowland Samwells

Wm. Rowland  
Alfred John Clarke

This document with its quasi-legal



phraseology, makes strange though interesting reading. This is the only intimation we have of Salamonsky's offer. Was it genuine, or was it introduced to make Rowland all the keener? Ten pounds does not seem a very high salary, and one would have thought that Salamonsky would have offered much more. But perhaps Alfred wanted to stay in the United Kingdom. He did, however, make one more trip to the Continent before the contract came into operation. On August 30th he set off from Jersey with a little girl, called May Waters, (who, we must assume, was an apprentice) to take her to Hertzog's Circus, then in Brunswick, and to hand her over to James Jee. Having accomplished this mission he returned via Hamburg, where he spent three days with his brother, John Frederick, then working with the Circus Renz, a show which he had joined in July. Sharing the bill with him were Lillie and Rosa Meers and Mr. Cooke's Equestrian Lion.

On September 8th, Alfred returned to Hull to open with Rowland's Circus in that city, and later to travel with it to Coventry for the Christmas season. On December 5th he bought Thomas Sylvester's grey mare, Dora, at Leamington. Christmas was spent with Charles Clarke and his family, who, at that time, were with the Fossetts in Northampton.

Meanwhile, the Circus Renz had returned to the famous building in the Karlstrasse, Berlin. John Frederick still topped the bill, though on the black and red posters the name of Mr. Rodgers, aerial gymnast, was equally prominent. At Christmas a pantomime was introduced, and although Clarke was not required to take part, the cast contains a number of well-known circus families: the Bradburys, Godlewski, Briatore, Cotrelly . . .

Old A. A. Clarke, together with his two youngest children, Annie and Charles, were again with Hengler in Glasgow. Once again young Alfred could not let the Christmas season go by without paying them a visit. He slipped up to see them on January 10th. A month later he opened with Rowland's Circus at Wolverhampton. His contract was nearing completion, and he cast his eye around for another engagement. Talking this over with his uncle, who was his senior by no more than 12 years, Alfred decided to go into partnership with Charles and put Clarke's Circus on the road in England once again. They planned to open at Grimsby, but, as a trial run, they took over the circus in Coventry for a week ending March 9th. In his notes, Alfred says that he was not at Coventry that week. Leaving the show in Charles' hands, he either worked with Rowland or went over to Grimsby to make arrangements for their open-



"Gentleman George" Ginnett, famous 19th century circus manager.

ing. Yet the Coventry programme contained names which he used, and his wife Annie Ginnett certainly appeared.

CLARKE'S CIRCUS, POOL MEADOW, COVENTRY, MARCH 1891

1. Overture by the Band. Musical Director, Mr. Harry Derbyshire.
2. "A Life on the Ocean Wave," illustrated on horseback by Mr. Charles Clarke.
3. Acrobatic Gambols by the Rocky Mountain Wonders
4. Gymnastic Performance on the Flying Rings by the Brothers Cappelean.
5. Great Bareback Trick Act by M.A.B. (scratched out and "Jim" inserted) Powell. Clowns, Brothers Cappelean.
6. Song, Cappelean.
7. Mr. C. Clarke in his wonderful Performance of the Dancing Barrel.
8. Charming Double Act of Horsemanship on two Bareback Horses by Mr. Powell and Madlle Isabella.
9. Musical Interlude by Alfred and John.
10. The Three Nations. Character Act on Horseback by Miss Annie Ginnett.
11. Grotesque Boxing by Wittle, Willie and DeVance.
12. The Charming Equestrienne, Madlle Isabella. Grotesque, DeVance.
13. Interlude, DeVance.
14. Great Aerial Performance by the "Lolos." The most

wonderful Gymnastic Act in the World.

15. Great Jockey Act by the Renowned Mr. George Batty (from the Covent Garden Circus, London).

16. Riding Tournament.

It may well be that the Lolos are the Clarkonians, and perhaps one of them was working as Madlle Isabella, the interlude would allow time for making the change. But this is supposition, and we must keep to the facts.

After finishing his contract with Rowland, Alfred stayed in Hull, where his father, brother Charles and sister Annie were working with Hengler; travelling over to Grimsby several times a week to get the circus ready for the opening on Easter Monday, March 20th, 1891.

Perhaps it was seeing his son and his brother start off with their own show in England, that led old A. A. Clarke to sell his Irish circus. That spring he went to Belfast and disposed of his share of Powell & Clarke's Paragon Circus to H. Cooke. On April 18th Alfred got his father's black mare over from Belfast; and early in May "A.A." perhaps with the proceeds of the sale, bought a pair of kangaroos for his son's circus venture.

When the Circus closed at Grimsby on May 9th, Charles and Alfred presented their show in the permanent circus building in Strand Road, Bootle, while the big top was taken to St. George's Field, York, ready for the opening on May 30th.

Here is the programme for Clarke's Circus in July that year. Juggling on Horseback by A. Clarke; Clown Silly Selby; Entree by Silly Selby; Mdle Isabella and Mr. J. Powell's Equestrian Act; Zetianiae, the Oriental Malabariste; Somersault Act, Mr. A. Clarke; Clown Funny Little Joe; Entree, Funny Little Joe; The English Jockey, Thomasso Allen; Character Act on Horseback, "Masaniello, the Fisherman of Naples," by Mr. C. Clarke; "Buenos Ayres," thoroughbred introduced by Mdle Fredrica; Martello, on the telephone wire; M. and Mdme Denny in their first riding lesson; The wonderful Clarkonians in their Classical Gymnastic Display, performing their wonderful feats blindfolded; and finally A Water Carnival, "Gretna Green," in four scenes, for the last of which "50,000 gallons of real water" flooded the ring in the incredible time of thirty seconds. The programme adds. "The proprietor does not hold himself liable for damage to dresses by the water."

But that month Alfred left Clarke's Circus. A few weeks previously he had signed a contract to appear for six months with Oscar Carre's Koniglich Niederlandischer Circus at 1,700 francs a month. At that time the franc was worth 10d., so Alfred's salary



amounted to more than £70 a month. This sum, considerably larger than that given by Rowland, must have tempted him away from his own show. He opened at s'Gravenhage on July 11th, with Gaston Neiwit, Henri Gassion, The Ethairien Brothers, Four Borghettis, Maria Dore, Thekla and Dora Hoffmann, Anna Ciotti, Anna Brose, Maximillian Carre and the clowns, Engle and Mr. Eugene. Later the programme was further strengthened with Charles M. Amalia and James Jee. Olchansky also joined the company, clowning in Alfred's riding act. On July 12th Annie arrived with the baby, so the Clarke Circus was robbed of another artiste.

Albert Hengler's Circus was playing at the Rotunda Gardens, Dublin, that August and with him were A. A. Clarke, Charles and Annie. Charles was juggling on horseback with Comical Cattle as clown, and Annie was appearing in a "Leaping and Pirouette Act on Horseback," with David Abbey Seal as clown. James Washington Myers worked a jockey act; Johnny Watson, Herr Blennow, the Leonard Brothers, and Michele and Sandro were also in the programme which ended with a pantomime entitled "A Village Wedding," which also introduced a Great Water Novelty.

Hengler looked after his company well, and on Wednesday, August 12th, he organized a Cycling and Athletic Sports Day for them at Ball's Bridge. Alfred Augustus Clarke was among the stewards and lap keepers. Event No. 9, a flip-flap race of 30 yards, was won by Charles Clarke, starting from scratch, and beating Little Joey (six yards handicap), Alexis (four yards), W. Bell (three yards), Sandro (three yards), and Michele (scratch). I imagine that this must have been A. A.'s nephew — Young Charles.

John Frederick joined Corty-Althoff at Strasburg that September, topping the bill as usual with Mr. Rodgers (who had worked with him at the Circus Renz), Adele Rossi, Alfons and Pierre Althoff. Again the programme ends with a pantomime, and again we find that the piece is a rural wedding, which involved flooding the ring with water — in this case 150,000 litres, some of which formed a waterfall, to provide an authentic setting for "Der Schmied von Groatna (sic) Green." It would appear that there was a certain lack of originality amongst circuses even in those days.

On his way to Strasbourg, Frederick went over to Wiesbaden to see his brother, Alfred, who was there with Carre's Circus. But on the whole this was an unlucky autumn for John Frederick. On Sunday, September 27th he fell, hurting his foot, and on Sunday, October 11th, he again fell, hurting his knee. He recuperated with

his brother, on the Carre show, which was by this time in Cologne.

Here, early in October, James H. Jee joined the company, before it moved on to Amsterdam, where it opened November 14th and was still playing when Alfred left at the end of his contract on January 10th, 1892. The day before, his wife and child, together with his brother John Frederick, left Amsterdam for Liverpool, where his father, sister Annie and brother Charles were still working with Hengler. Alfred joined them, before returning to Hull to meet his horses (which had been brought over from Amsterdam by his groom) and sending them on to Coventry, where the circus which he and his uncle had started was then working. He himself did not join the company, but joined Bostock's Circus at Bingley Hall, Birmingham. On January 20th, 1892, there was no performance as it was the day of the Duke of Clarence's funeral. Alfred appeared for the first time with Bostock on February 8th but on the following day he hurt his knee and went back to Coventry.



In the 19th and early 20th centuries, male and female impersonation was a popular and perfectly acceptable form of show business. Alfred (Augustus) Clarke is shown here as Signoretta Isabelle.

This month also brought trouble to Alfred Augustus. One must assume that for some reason he did not get the money which was due to him for his interest in Powell & Clarke's Paragon Circus in Ireland. Perhaps the H. Cooke, to whom Alfred referred in his notes, had died, for the following handbill was issued:

CIRCUS PROPERTY  
SHERIFF'S SALE  
County of Down to wit. (Ireland)

Alfred Clarke, Plaintiff; versus  
Catherine Cooke,  
Circus Proprietor, Defendant  
To Be Sold  
BY AUCTION

On the Premises of the  
Defendant,

In the Townland of Gregach  
(Belfast), in the County of Down  
ON SATURDAY  
20th FEBRUARY  
at the hour of  
Eleven o'clock a.m.

Band Carriage, Eight Carved  
Tableau Carriages, Pay Box,  
Wardrobe, Harness, Canvas,  
and Two Living Carriages; also  
Tent Wagons, Lorries, Clowns'  
and other Traps; One Dressing  
Tent, and a lot of Useful Tenting  
Stuff.

Poles, Ropes, Iron Stakes,  
Brackets, "V's", Boards,  
Lamps, Pads, etc.

Terms — Prompt Cash. Purchasers to pay 5% Auction Fees.

JAS. STEWART,  
AUCTIONEER,  
14, SMITHFIELD.

I rather think that Alfred Augustus may have slipped over to Ireland for the sale, as he was working at Liverpool. Anyhow, on February 29th, he, John Frederick, Annie and Charles went to Coventry and spent four days with Alfred, before joining Hengler's Circus at Curzon Hall, Birmingham.

A letter, which shows the intimate terms Alfred was on with Hengler, reads as follows:

Copelands,  
Staunton,  
Nr. Glo'ster.  
Monday.

Dear Alf,

Don't forget that you and Alfie come over on Thursday. Let me know what time you will arrive in Glo'ster. Come as early as you can, I mean don't leave it too late.

Yours

Albert H.

I shall want you to stand a bottle at Gloucester Station. A.H.

A note in Alfred John's hand on the envelope reads "Married on Monday, April 25th, 1892." Thinking that this might refer to Hengler, and that the bottle could well be used to drink a toast, I checked the date at Somerset House. And there it was: the marriage at the parish church, Clifton, Bristol, on April 25th, 1892, between Albert Henry Hengler, 29, Bachelor and circus proprietor, of 19 Richmond Terrace (son of Frederick Charles Hengler, deceased, circus proprietor) and Julia Sterne Lane, 20, of 5, Denmark Street, St. Augustines, (daughter of Richard Edwin Lane, Butcher). The bride's father and Walter Burnes Hengler were witnesses.



John Frederick stayed with Alfred, and later that month started practising; but after a week he again hurt his leg. Otherwise the season seems to have passed uneventfully. The notes consist of domestic details, such as "March 7th. Sent Father's spot horse to Birmingham for Charlie to ride," and "The Jee Family left Coventry for Birmingham." When the circus closed at Coventry in April, Alfred agreed that his uncle should take it over and run it on his own. Sam Lockhart had offered Alfred a contract for six months at a salary of 1,700 francs, his repertory to include, "Backward and forward somersault act, Jockey Act first class, Equestrian Juggling Act, backwards, Barrel a Lanpatini (?), and to tour own two horses."

Sam Lockhart's Grand Cirque International was due to open in Rheims on April 17th, and Alfred, Annie, child, groom and horses all made their way there. On the bill were Rose Montero, La Baronne Bellefoi, Ella Boorn and Harry Lockhart, presenting six elephants. On Wednesday, May 4th Alfred fell in the trick act and was stunned, but was well enough to perform the next day. From Rheims the circus went to Nancy, where the child caught measles; and on May 19th, Alfred attended an all-night supper to celebrate the Silver Wedding of Gerretti, a member of the company who appeared on "la corde volante." After Nancy came Amiens, Charleroi, Elboeuf, Lille and Liege. Here Alfred's contract came to an end on October 19th.

Alfred and his family returned to England and made straight for Wakefield, where his father, brothers John Frederick and Charles, and sister Annie were all at Zaro's Circus. But Alfred did not stay long, exactly one week later he was off to the Continent again to join Circus Busch at Verviers, where he opened on October 29th. His contract was for one year, at 1,400 francs a month, with a further year's option. From Verviers, Busch went to the Cirque Royal at Brussels for the Winter season, where on November 27th he appeared before the King, Queen, and Royal Family. La Baronne Walberg was also in the bill, and Mdle Hodgini appeared in a *pas de deus* with Mr. Wells.

Meanwhile, John Frederick was with Hengler's in Bristol. A cutting from an unnamed newspaper reads:

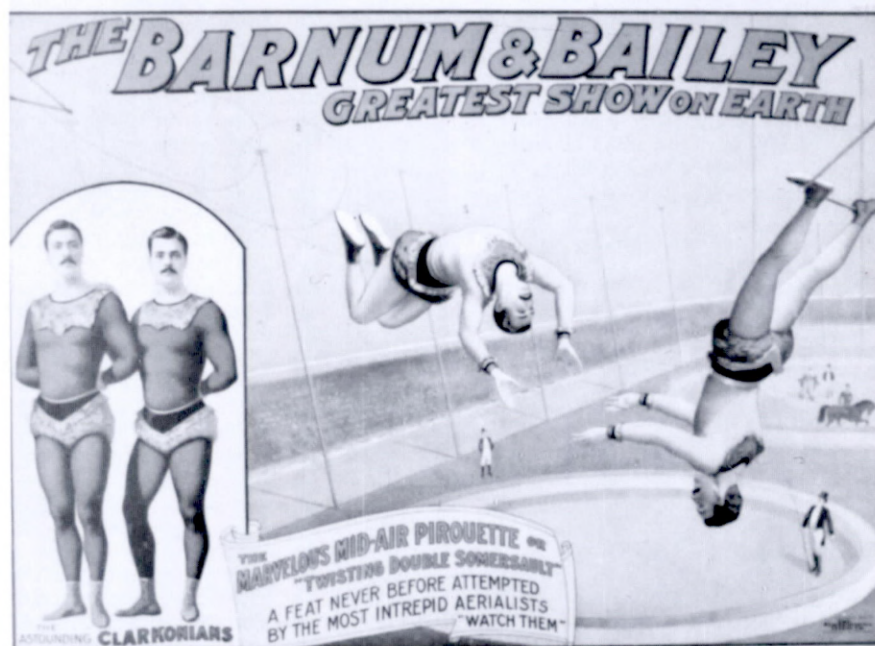
This popular entertainment will positively close on Wednesday, Nov. 9th. Go and see it again before it is too late, especially as because this week Mr. John Frederick Clarke, the phenomenal bareback steed rider, has been engaged for the remainder of the season; also Herr Bennow's wonderfully clever troupe of jolly dogs. The

great water novelty will be presented every evening with all the comical affects, and the last morning performance of the season will take place next Saturday.

Alfred Augustus, Annie and Charles were at John Henry Cooke's Circus, East Fountainbridge, Lothian Road, Edinburgh. Alfred Augustus was working his horse, Mikado, which walked up and down stairs, and also gave his impresssion of "The Life of a Gambler."

Uncle Charles' Circus could not have been an outstanding success, for 1892 saw the departure of this side of the family, The Clarkonians, from England. According to R. Conover, who most kindly obtained information from Ernestine and her Uncle Percy, Charles and his family worked on the Continent from 1892 to 1902. They then joined the Barnum and Bailey Show, working in America in 1903 and 1904, and opening at the New York Hippodrome in 1905. They remained with Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey for the next 20 years, though they returned for one winter season with Hengler in 1908.

joyed Christmas and welcomed in the New Year in Brussels. On January 25th, he hurt his right ankle rather badly, and was out of the bill when the circus played Bonn for the first three weeks in February. On Wednesday, February 22nd, his wife Annie and son Alfred left for Wallingford, arriving there on the following Saturday. Meanwhile the Circus Busch moved on to Stuggart, where, on that Saturday, Alfred rode in his trick act, his first appearance in the ring since his accident in Brussels. At the end of March, they left for Vienna, and here he received the news that his wife had given birth to a daughter, also to be called Annie, on April 15th, at Wallingford. Three weeks later, on May 6th, his wife and son joined him in Vienna, where the circus remained until June 7th. By this time, Mlle. Allarty from Paris had joined the company.<sup>1</sup> Frankfurt, Dusseldorf, Chemnitz, Bremen and Dresden followed. On Tuesday, November 21st, there was a performance without music, on Wednesday and the following Sunday there were no performances because they were Holy Days. But the season in Dresden



Of those who remained in England, news is scarce for 1893. In fact the only reference that I have been able to find is a programme for the summer season of The Grand Circus, Chubb Hill Road, Whitby, in which Mr. Charles Augustus Clarke juggled on horseback, Miss Annie introduced "her beautiful High School mare," and Mr. Alfred Clarke (senior) appeared as The Courier of St. Petersburg.

Alfred (junior) and his family en-

lasted over Christmas and well into 1894. In January that year the programme included a competition between five jockeys, the Meers sisters, Maria Dore, Signor Alfredo and Mr. Clarke.

Back in England, Annie was riding backwards in "an extraordinary juggling act," Charles was billed as "the Greatest Somersault Rider in the World" and Alfred Clarke senior was appearing as "The Courier of St. Petersburg," at Gilbert's Modern Cir-



cus, Agricultural Hall, Norwich. Alfred Clarke also presented Black Bess, in a staircase routine. Five acts in the programme are billed in heavy type: Lauck and Dunbar; The Telegraph Messengers on the Telephone Wires; Mr. Thomas and Miss Madilini; Mr. Charles Clarke; the Great White-Fly Family; and the Oviato Troupe of Acrobats, who are described as the only artistes in the world who throw somersaults from head to head.

An undated letter is headed: "Chevalier Blondin, The Hero of Niagara, Niagara Villa, Boscobel Place, Regents Park, N.W." This has been crossed out, and in its place written "Little Ealing, Tudeday." It reads:

My dear Young Man,

I am in receipt of your humbling telegram of last night. I am very glad to see that you have not forgotten me. I am still *moving* but will give it up as I cannot see the use of *moving* by myself not like you in Norwich you have plenty of places to *move in*. Your telegram is very insulting, and I send you my card as a challenge, but we will not fight it out with swords, but will drown our enmity in champagne, which I hope will be soon. Your insult I take to your ignorance, it was you that was tight not me a proof of that is that they would not let you pass the gates to come on the platform for fear of you causing a disturbance and delaying the train.

It is no use me writing more but until we meet for me to have satisfaction.

Believe me to remain, with compliments to your daughter, son and self in which my son joins—

Your very sincerely,  
J. F. Blondin

(under the signature there is a drawing of an eye)

Mr. Alfred Clarke.

P.S. Don't forget the £10,000 a year. If you can find one for me I will give you 5% or if young with £5,000, well, perhaps will give 1%.

On February 19th, 1894 Blondin had joined Gilbert for his first season at Norwich (which opened on December 26th, 1893), and Alfred, Annie and Charles were in the bill. Blondin left on February 26th, and probably wrote, or dictated (the handwriting and signature are not exactly the same) this letter on his return to London. The Clarkes were again in Norwich for the 1898-1899 season but by this time Blondin was dead. Blondin's first wife died in 1888 and he married again in 1895, but whether

she had £10,000 a year is extremely doubtful!

John Frederick was with Hengler in Liverpool at this time. Here he gave an interview to a reporter of *The Liverpool Sentinel* which was published on February 24th. How much is accurate reporting, and of the accurate reporting how much is true, it is difficult to say. John Frederick's tongue may have slipped into his cheek, but he expressed some interesting views and told some amusing stories. In answer to the question, "Is it really true that performing on a pad is as difficult as on the bare-back?" he replied, "Quite. It is, in fact, more dangerous, and I greatly prefer the bare-back. Few horses will allow anyone to do such feats as mine unless on a pad. It gives them too great a shock when I alight after turning a somersault; but I have performed without a pad several times this season, as I am aware that the public like it, and consider it more effective. The feats I do at present are a new departure in equestrianism, and before I introduced them I used to do the Juggling and the Jockey Acts."

The reporter then asked if he had had many amusing experiences, and John Frederick continued, "One in Ballinasloe, we got up a tug of war between one of our elephants and a hundred men from the audience. Of course the elephant was more than a match for his opponents, and was winning easily, when an enthusiastic native rushed forward and cut the rope with a big clasp knife, shouting as he did so — 'Niver lit it be said that an ould dried-up elephant beat one hundrid min av Ballinasloe!'"

"When appearing in Kilkenny, a man in the audience patted me heartily on the back and said, 'Yer a bould fellow, me jewel, but ye'll niver be as dud a man as yer father was, for he was afther riding four horses at a time, and he had a fut on each of them.'"

Busch closed in Dresden on March 21st and opened in Vienna on March 27th, which was Easter Sunday. Cologne followed, and from there Annie travelled to Amiens to visit her father-in-law, who was working with Charles and Annie Clarke at the Circus Lenka. A handbill for the Grand Cirque Lenka at Tournai, a town which this circus visited in September 1894, gives the precise time at which the star turn made his appearance. "*Tous les soirs à 8 heures, Brillantes Représentations, Nombreuses Attractions. A 10h M. Charley Clarke, le premier écuyer du monde.*" Alfred's wife may have left her son on this show, or perhaps in England where she went after Amiens. She rejoined her husband with Busch at Brunswick. In the notes Alfred wrote "Annie with our two children arr. Brunswick." But "two children" has been scratched out and

"girl" inserted. John Frederick must have finished his contract in England, for on September 3rd he brought Alfred junior over from Turcoing, stayed with Alfred in Dresden, and in October returned to his father and Charles on the Lenka show, then at Liege.

Alfred's engagement with the Circus Busch ended on October 27th, and on November 1st he started with the Circus Renz in Berlin. His contract was for a year at 1,800 francs a month; it was drawn up by Franz Schultz and signed by Franz Renz.

Renz' season in Berlin lasted from November 1st, 1894, to March 7th, 1895, and in December Alfred was billed to appear in a double juggling act with a Miss Agnes. In February a new contract was signed. Why? The period was the same, there seems to be no difference in the clauses, yet the salary was dropped from 1,800 marks a month to 1,400. Another interesting point about this programme is that on the handbills the horses are given more prominence than any human performer. "Colmar-schwartz-brauner hengst" and "Blondel, ost-preussischer hengst" are given better billing than Clarke, the Bonhair Troupe or even Renz himself.

From March 9th to May 15th they remained in Breslau, where for some time Alfred appeared in a Jockey Act, and from May 18th until August 1st the circus remained in Hannover. Here Alfred hurt his knee rather badly and was confined to his house for ten days.

According to Alfred's list of pro digs and hotels, the place he stayed in at Hannover was 8 Oberstrasse, *I rechts*, which was run by someone called Snell, but in brackets after the address one can read "Five Days," so presumably he then moved to the second address given, Herr Hahn's house, at 3a Theodorstrasse, where he occupied "*III links*." When the circus moved on to Cologne and Hamburg he most probably stayed with P. Buhr, 11 St. Apenstrasse, and Annie Petersen, 23 Hoppenstrasse (*II links*), St. Pauli. Here in Hamburg his contract with Renz ended and he returned home to join his brother who was then with Gilbert's Circus in Nottingham.

John Frederick had spent that season with English circuses. At mid-summer he had been with Crockett's Grand Cirque, Westmount, People's Park, St. Helier's, Jersey. Here Rose Montero was riding in a school Act and presenting a horse *en liberté*. John Frederick contributed his juggling act as well as performing as a trick-rider. In July he — the greatest of all the Clarkes — was with H. Boswell's Circus at Oxford. The programme lays less stress on horses than those found on the Continent, it is worth giving as a typical English



circus performance of the fin-de-siècle:

1. Pleasing Characteristic Costume Scene on Horseback, MISS NELLIE BOSWELL.

2. THE MERRY THORPS, THE TWO DROLLS.

3. JAMES CLEMENT BOSWELL will now appear and introduce his three sons, James, Walter and Alfred, as "Three Little Japs from School."

4. Comical Interlude by Comical Cattle.

5. Manipulations Extraordinary on a Galloping Steed by MR. JOHN F. CLARKE. Clown, Little Jimmy Thorpe.

6. Comic Entree by Jimmy Thorpe.

7. First Appearance of Miss ROSE MONTERO who will introduce her Thoroughbred Liberty Performing Horse, "Baby."

8. Master Willie Cattle, in his extraordinary Balancing Equilibristic Act on an Enchanted Ladder.

9. MDLLE CAROLINE, in her Continental Descriptive Scene on Horseback, "Joan of Arc."

10. The Juvenile Lawn Tennis acrobats, in their marvellous acrobatic Entertainment.

11. Special Engagement of JOHN FREDERICK CLARKE, the Horseman of the Age, who can do more on a Galloping Horse's Back than an ordinary individual can accomplish on terra firma.

Clown, Frisky Little Bishop.

12. Droll Interlude by Little Bishop.

13. Mdle ROSE MONTERO will introduce her thoroughbred buck-jumping Horse "Belisarius."

14. Little Bishop and Darwin's Missing Link.

15. The American Riding Machine, or Circus Riding Exposed.

Master Willie Cattle was the son of Comical Cattle and Nellie Boswell (who died on May 21st, 1938). Just before the last war I saw him playing the Deacon King in a pantomime, under his stage name Du Calion. E. M. Shears mentioned him in an article in a number of *The King Pole* (Series II. No. 14) and described how he was largely self-educated. Apparently he used to read books at the top of his unsupported ladder when his father was not looking. Shears continued, "Fifty years ago many clowns did 'the Duchess of Devonshire,' one man standing on another's shoulders, the top one wearing a lady's big hat and double length dress. Cattle did this

standing on his ladder . . . until he had an awkward fall and gave it up. He went to the U.S.A., doing the ladder act and a high-mast act. He later got some good patter, which he delivered very well. Dressed as a midshipman and using a long and a short ladder, he changed his name to Du Calion, and got twenty times the salary in America vaudeville that he received in English circuses. Marinelli booked him for Europe and he appeared at the Royal Command Performance at the London Coliseum in 1919. Later he spent many years in Blackpool, and as an actor in pantomime each year. He was also scene-painter, prop-maker, and painter of pictures. He had a good speaking voice and accent . . . In 1956 he appeared in a radio programme as one of a group of old pro's. He died in the same year, aged 76 . . ." He was therefore born in 1880, which means he was 15 when he appeared on the bill of Boswell's circus with John Frederick Clarke.



John Frederick Clarke dressed as a female.

From Oxford to Cambridge, where in September John Frederick joined Tudor's New Circus on Midsummer Common. Here his clown was Funny Little Teddy Saul, who died in November, 1952, aged 81.

No doubt John Frederick put in a good word for his brother, for on October 28th we find Alfred starting out with Tudor's Circus in Macclesfield, and here his wife, Annie, joined him a month later. By this time John Frederick's contract was running out and he was preparing to join Rancy in Lyons. Charles and Annie were also

on the Continent. I rather suspect that Alfred Augustus was with them, although his name does not appear on the programme. "Mr. Charles Clarke," however, on one occasion has "senior" after it, and this is when he appeared in an equestrian scene. Otherwise the billing shows that Mr. Charles and Miss Annie juggled on horseback, Miss Annie Clarke appeared in an equestrian scene and Mr. Charles Clarke as "The American Jockey." It seems possible, therefore, that Mr. Charles Clarke senior was really Alfred Augustus; though it may be that this was his brother, who was fourteen years his junior.

The programme of Wulff's circus is one of the strangest I have seen. It is printed on soft Japanese paper, in German and Hungarian, surrounded by Japanese drawings in full colour. It is dated Sunday, August 4th, 1895, and from it we learn that, besides the Clarke Family and Edouard Wulff, the Tanti-Bedini clowns, Maurice Cronin, Mr. P. Batty, Little Fred and the Harrison Brothers were on the bill.

That winter Wulff's circus came to London, so when Alfred finished in Macclesfield and came South to start his engagement with Hales's Circus in Croydon at Christmas, "Father, Annie and Charles met us there from the Crystal Palace," where Wulff's Circus was working.

T. Gardiner Hales kept a theatrical warehouse at 40, Wellington Street, Strand, London. He was a manufacturer and importer of stage laces, spangles, foils, braids, fringes, stage jewelry and all kinds of theatrical boots and shoes. He also put on the circus which opened, on Boxing Day, 1895, at the New National Hall and Grand Theatre of Varieties, Croydon. He paid Alfred "£8 a week to perform in his usual performance as jockey, etc." that "etc." meant that Alfred also appeared with his Enchanted Barrel Act. When he appeared as Champion Somersault Act Rider of the World, Teddy Saul acted as his clown. The programme was substantially changed at least once. "A Grand Production at Enormous Expense" involved 100 Croydon children, trained and drilled by W. Selkirk, who depicted the Storming of Canton in 1857. When this was taken out of the bill, H. Dale replaces Teddy Saul as Clown in Alfred's riding act, though Saul remains with the company. Although the contract was for eight weeks Hales's Circus closed its doors on February 1st.

Four days later Alfred left his son at the Crystal Palace (with his father, brother and sister) and his wife and baby daughter in Croydon. He then set off for South America where he had a contract to appear with Frank Brown. It is a considerably more impressive document than that issued by



Hales. This is no handwritten note drawn up on a Memo from a theatrical warehouse, but a printed contract with an official sixpenny stamp. It reads as follows:

**FRANK BROWN'S  
EQUESTRIAN COMPANY  
SOUTH AMERICA**

Dated: London, Jan. 31st, 1896

Engagement between Frank Brown of the one part and Alfred Clarke of the other. Witnesseth that the said Alfred Clarke agrees to accept engagement in South America as performer in the capacity of Equestrian etc. to do the following acts (as per letter dated January 22nd in my F. B. possession) viz: 1. Somersault Act barebacked; 2. Somersault Act pad; 3. Jockey Act; 4. Equestrian Juggling; 5. Dancing Barrel. Engagement to be for six months at a salary of £28 (or its equivalent in the currency of the country) per week. The said A. Clarke and his two horses to perform in any circus, theatre, or establishment the management may consider convenient.

Travelling expenses paid by Mr. F. Brown from Southhampton to the establishment in South America and from his establishment back to England for Mr. Clarke and his two horses at the end of the engagement (second class). Engagement to commence within one week of landing in S.A. Mr. Clarke to leave Southhampton on February 7th '96, the grooming, stabling and feeding of Mr. Clarke's two horses from the date of sailing from England to the return and landing in England to be at Mr. Brown's expense.

This contract is subject to the rules and regulations set forth on the back of this sheet. In the event of Mr. Clarke failing to perform any of the above-mentioned acts, a fifth of the above mentioned salary to be deducted for each act. Observations: In the event of anything unforeseen occurring to Mr. Clarke's two horses, this contract is still good on the above terms on condition that Mr. Clarke rides Mr. Brown's horses for his acts, which Mr. Clarke has the right to select for himself. A penalty of one hundred and twenty pounds to be paid by either party for non-fulfillment of this agreement.

Signature: Frank Brown  
Alfred Clarke.

The rules and regulations on the back of the contract seem strict but fair. All performers had to be in the circus every day by 10 o'clock and not leave before 11:30. They had to be in the circus 15 minutes before the performance began. They had to dress in the uniform of the establishment to receive incoming performers. They were expected cheerfully to replace any artiste who was unable to appear . . . and so on.

**TEATRO SAN MARTIN**  
Gran Suceso Gran Suceso  
**GRAN COMPANIA ECUESTRE**  
**FRANK BROWN**  
**HOY Miércoles 11 de Marzo 1896 HOY**

**HOY**  
  
**HOY**

**GRAN SUCESO GRAN SUCESO**  
**MR. MARIE GODFROY**  
En su sorprendente acto con:  
**LA FANTASIA CIRCASIANA**  
**LA GRAN NOVEDAD DEL DIA**  
**★ LOS ANFIBIOS DEL SIGLO XIX ★**  
Misa FLORENCE y Mr. DICKENSON

  
**MR. CLARKE**  
**CUADROMANIA AEREA**  
POR LA TROUPE  
**FERNANDEZ**

**Entradas oímicas**  
FOR  
**TONY el IMBOIL**  
y el clown FOMAREZIO  
Admision por el pueblo

**FRANK BROWN**

| PRECIOS                     |      |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Palco, logeas, etc.         | 5.00 |
| 1 <sup>a</sup> balcon, etc. | 3.00 |
| 2 <sup>a</sup> balcon, etc. | 2.00 |
| Terreño, etc.               | 1.00 |
| Palco, logeas, etc.         | 5.00 |
| 1 <sup>a</sup> balcon, etc. | 3.00 |
| 2 <sup>a</sup> balcon, etc. | 2.00 |
| Terreño, etc.               | 1.00 |

**A LAS OCHO Y SIEMPRE EN PUNTO**  
Fusion todas las noches — Domingos y fiestas DOS FUNCIONES

Herald used by the Frank Brown Circus in its Latin American tour.

Frank Brown, was, I believe, one of twelve children born to Henry Brown and Sarah Wood. Henry was born on December 17th in 1814, at Broxburgh in Hampshire, and died in 1902. His first appearance was with Franconi at the circus in the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, in September, 1851. He was clown with James Newsome, Croueste and Fred Ginnett. His last appearance was at the age of 83 at George Ginnett's benefit. Of his children, I think that Zara married Little Frisaka

Gilleno, one called himself Le Brun, and another was christened Adele. Frank made his name running shows in South America, where he billed himself as the famous English clown.

The bill does not contain any well-known names except Marie Godfroy and Clarke, but the heading, depicting a clown's head in a "balloon," topped by the Prince of Wales feathers and flanked by two horse's heads, is exactly the same as that used by Guillaume's Circus in the late '70's, but here the words "Circo Emilio Guillaume" have been replaced by "Compania FRANK BROWN Equestre."

Alfred Clarke's first performance in S. America took place on March 10th at the Teatro San Martin, Buenos Aires. Here the company stayed until June 10th, when they visited Montevideo, returned to Buenos Aires for another three weeks, and then worked a three-day stand at La Plata. The company next took a ship to Rio, calling in at Santos, Brazil, on August 1st, where Alfred went ashore to see Amato's Circus, found that he could not get back on board, and had to walk about all night. They arrived at Rio on August 7th and gave their first performance four days later, at the Teatro San Pedro Alcantara. On October 25th they returned to La Plata. By this time Liza Tourniaire, Antonieta and Carlos, and the sisters Welby-Cooke are on the bills. Alfred's leg seems to have been troubling him, for on November 9th he went to see Dr. O'Connor and, as a result, he had an operation on his knee at the British Hospital on November 12th and stayed there until the 30th. On December 6th he boarded SS 'Afghan Prince' to return home. In Alfred's album there is a label which reads, "To Mr. Alfred Clarke, with Frank Brown's Compliments, trusting it will amuse you *en voyage*. Buenos Aires, Dec. 5th, 1896." What it was originally attached to I do not know, but it does show that Alfred got on well with the management.

On the first night of the voyage his pad horse died. Christmas was spent off the Cape Verde Islands. He arrived at Antwerp on January 13th, took the channel boat to Harwich and arrived in London on January 16th, where his father and Charlie met him at Liverpool Street station. "At once," his notes read, "to Norwood. Annie, Alf, and Baby and sister Annie there. Wulff's Circus at Crystal Palace."

Alfred had been away for almost a year. What had the rest of the family been doing? In April, Alfred Augustus had presented his Irish horse, Bess, in a liberty act at Albert Schumann's Scandinavian Circus, the Alberthalle, Krystall-Palast, Leipzig. With him were Annie and Charles, the latter working a somersault riding act and both appearing in a double juggling



act on horseback. The children shared top billing with Julius Seeth and his 12 lions, though Leicester Cooke, Alf Daniels and Clara Schumann were also in the programme. In May Alfred Augustus was presenting his "Three Nations on Horseback," Charles was working as a Jockey and Annie "en grande vitesse." A drawing published in a newspaper, and labelled "*Geschister Clarke, Vienna, December, 1896*" shows a girl standing on a pad facing backwards and juggling three large balls with a man standing on another horse immediately behind the first.

John Frederick Clarke, we know, left England to join Rancy, and at the beginning of December this circus was in Rouen. He stayed with it on its North African tour at the beginning of 1897. George Palmer and Woodson, the Infernal Voltigeur, were with the company when it visited Algiers in January. At the beginning of April they were in Oran. The programme seems to have been particularly strong in clowns, Orlando, Averino, Talep, Hassan, Antonio, Hermany, Cianchi, and Bugny are all mentioned in the programme. Rancy then left for Lyons and John Frederick managed to snatch a week at home, but his father, brother and sister were by this time on the Continent, though still with Wulff. In February, before leaving England, Alfred Augustus had added another scene to his equestrian interpretation of England, Ireland and Scotland, this was "taken from the Zulu War and entitled 'The Dying Soldier.'" At this time Wulff was billing Charles as The Greatest Tumbler in the World on Horseback. In April they were in Hamburg and in May at Kiel.

George Ginnett gave Alfred J. Clarke a job at his circus in Campbell Street, Leicester, in January 1897, issuing a £100 challenge to anyone who could beat this "Champion Somersault Thrower on Horseback." But the first thing Alfred had to do was to find a new pad horse. First he went to Felix's Circus at Rotherham to see a horse belonging to Hannaford; he scouted round Carre's Circus, which in March, 1897, was at Manchester. At the beginning of May he went to The Hague, where his old friend Archie Pearson met him, and tried out Althoff's black and white horse; the next day he went to Amsterdam, where he met James Powell and inspected Delbosq's grey at Schumann's Circus. On returning to The Hague he looked at a bay mare. But he returned empty-handed to London. On arrival, however, he had second thoughts, so he returned to The Hague that night and bought the bay mare, returning with her via Harwich. Down in the old circus building on the Bath Road at Cheltenham, he started rehearsing



**James and Amalia Jee, who often worked on the same bill as the Clarks, came from a family famous in the circus and variety field.**

with the new horse; but on June 25th she went lame, so he put her out to grass and went off once more in search of another. First he visited Brussels, picked up his father, who was there with Wulff, and went on to Namur to see a horse which was with the Cirque Ducos. But this horse did not suit him, and realizing that it might take him a long time to find what he wanted, he returned home and brought Annie and the children over to Brussels. On August 20th he went to see Rancy's horse, Picardy, which his brother had described when the Rancy Circus was in Boulogne. He travelled with the show to Lille before returning to Brussels. Miss Adam's grey was inspected at the Carré Circus, Scheveningen. He left Annie and the children at Lille while he went to Strasbourg to try Fred Bellini's horse, Prince, then working with Caesar Sidoli's Circus. He obviously went back to discuss this horse with his brother before the latter left for Glasgow, for John Frederick's contract with Rancy had come to an end and his next date was with Hengler. Sending Annie and the children home on September 29th, he returned to Strasbourg and bought Prince from Bellini. It had taken eight months to replace the pad horse that had died.

That September Alfred Clarke signed a contract to appear with Barnum and Bailey, for not less than eleven months at £20 a week, less 10% commission payable to J.F.P. Hyatt, Agent, of 48 Strand, London. Alfred was excluded from appearing in the Roman Games and in the vaulting and tumbling, but the house

rules are extremely strict and seem almost petty today. Rule 17 for instance, which carries a penalty of 4/- to £1, runs, "No employee . . . will go to bed in the cars with their clothing or boots on, thus soiling or destroying the bedding." But this engagement did not start until December and Alfred had to rehearse his new horse. On October 11th he opened with Arundale's Royal English Circus, Corporation Street, Birmingham. Valdo was clown and the Yeldings also were in the bill. The second week saw Rose Montero and Professor Rosco's Performing Pigs in the bill and Valdo was replaced by Funny Little Bishop. On November 18th Alfred hurt his leg and finished with Arundale's Circus. Ten days later he joined Transfield's Up-To-Date American Circus and Hippodrome, at Park Street, Walsall. Here he and Annie found Albert Austin and his wife, so the two sisters met. He left Transfield's on December 18th and travelled down to London, where his father and brother Charlie met him at Addison Road. They and his sister Annie were still with Wulff who had returned once more to the Crystal Palace. Alfred rehearsed all Christmas Day and Boxing Day at Olympia. The show opened on Monday December 27th.

He appeared in "Display No. 8 Three Champion Bareback Equestrian Acts including a Double Jockey Act. In Ring No. 1. An Unrivalled Principal Champion Equestrian Act, WM SHOWLES. In Ring No. 2. An Unapproachable Double Bareback Jockey Act, WILLIAM and APPOLONIA ORFORD. In Ring No. 3. An Unparalleled Principal Champion Equestrian Act, ALFRED CLARKE.

Ring Number 3 was at the Blythe Road end of the arena. One of the most interesting acts in the programme was that of Monsieur La Roche with his mysterious globe, afterwards written up by Kober in his book, *Star Turns*. But the material on Barnum and Bailey is too easily accessible in other places to warrant much space in this history of the Clarks.

On Wednesday, January 18th, 1898, Elizabeth Annie, mother of Alfred, John Frederick, Charles and Annie, died at Wallingford, and was buried there four days later. John Frederick came down from Scotland for the funeral. Her husband Augustus Alfred, then aged 56, was enjoying a great success as Dick Turpin at the Crystal Palace with Wulff. Both *The Daily News* and *The Times* gave him excellent notices. "Mr Clarke has done much admirable work in the Circus ring, and his latest achievement in the skillful training and handling of Black Bess will go far to enhance his reputation." Charles was working his Jockey Act and with Annie was also juggling on horseback.



On March 8th, the Circus Wulff left for Ghent, and on April 2nd, Barnum and Bailey set out on their provincial tour. John stayed with Alfred in Manchester until the time came for him to join Hengler in Dublin. At the end of July Prince went lame and was sent back to Canterbury. In Glasgow he sold one of his horses, Dora, to Humel, and rode his bay mare. So the tour through England and Scotland continued, until on November 12th, Alfred's contract ended at Stoke-on-Trent. Here Barnum and Bailey's Circus organized a farewell supper party. The menu, headed "Pleasant Memories of Summer Days," runs as follows:

Clam Chowder a la Boston  
Steamed Clams,  
New England Style  
Kennebec River Salmon  
Potatoes Natural,  
Sauce Hollandaise  
Olives  
Ox Tongues with Spinach  
Young Turkey, Dressing,  
Cranberry Sauce  
Philadelphia Spring Chicken  
Creamed Potatoes,  
Dressed lettuce  
Grouse Larded, Bread Sauce  
Watercress, Julian Potatoes  
Prime Ribs of Beef  
Mashed Potatoes,  
Yorkshire Pudding  
Canterbury Lamb, Mint Sauce  
French Peas  
Sucking Pig Stuffed,  
Apple Sauce  
Tomato Salad  
Cakes, Fruit, Nuts  
Pumpkin Pie  
English Plum Pudding  
Brandy and Hard Sauce  
Coffee

A week later he was with Hengler in Glasgow working his barrel act and as jockey rider. Sebaldu Schaffer, Hugo Hertzog, W. Lloyd, Huxter and Marceline were in the bill. John Frederick passed through before joining Gilbert's circus at Norwich and so did his father, brother and sister, at the end of their contract with Wulff. When Hengler's Christmas season was over, the whole family again foregathered, spending a fortnight together in Norwich before taking up their engagements for the 1899 season. On March 9th Alfred Augustus and Charles left for the Cirque Plège at Bordeaux, Annie did not go with them as she had to have an operation. She accompanied Alfred and John Frederick who were both appearing with Felix's Circus, which opened at Dudley. By May she had made a sufficiently good recovery to leave her brothers, (the circus was then in Stockport) and travel to Nancy, where she presumably joined her father and other brother.

This was the first year that John Frederick and Alfred teamed up together. They did not appear in the same act as Sir Toney Felix's New Royal Circus in Stockport though their contributions naturally formed a large part of the programme, both brothers making two appearances at each performance. When they joined John Henry Cooke's Circus at Greenock in June, John Frederick appeared once only, as "The English Jockey." Here there was another reunion, for on the bill was Wa-no-tee, the North American Indian Chief, graphically portrayed by Leon Douglas Cooke, whose wife Iona Ginnett was Alfred's sister-in-law.



On June 26th, J. F. Percival Hyatt, the agent, signed up Alfred and John Frederick to perform at The Crystal Palace for the Christmas season for a salary of £60 a week. When they left Cooke to appear at the Blackpool Alhambra, their contract was for £32.10.- a week made out to The Brothers Clarke. This contract has a note in Alfred's hand, "Four weeks and two days extra shows, Blackpool Alhambra, £44." As the contract was for two shows a day, but they actually gave three, this must refer to the extra money paid them during this month. Here they did work in the ring together being billed as The Brothers Clarke, Rival Jockeys. Alfred also appeared as a Champion Club Manipulator, and John Frederick worked his somersault act. At this time the ringmaster is their old colleague from Ireland, Otto Twigg.

On September 30th they went to The Tower of Varieties and Circus, Hurst Street, Birmingham, where they were also billed as a double jockey act, and where also they each appeared in a solo specialty. This programme reflects the growing emphasis on acrobatics and gymnastics. Apart from the juggling and riding of the Clarkes, there was Yesokichi on the perpendicular rope; Altas and Vulcan, Modern Athletes; George Legler's Troupe of Acrobats; The Brothers Leonard on the horizontal bar; Celest, The Wire King; The Three Escaladors, Double Ladder Balancers; The Zoes on the Flying Trapeze; and Mademoiselle Tamamoto, Sword Swallower. Two other names appear

which are still known in British circuses: Cliff Berzac, who was then presenting a wrestling and boxing pony and a leaping board-hound; and Clown Rabbit (Willie Richards). But here again the programme changed, and at the end of October a triple bar act, Arab Tumblers, trick cyclists, a lady gymnast and a rolling globe act supported the Clarkes.

On November 18th, they opened at Tom Yelding's Prince of Wales Circus, Plymouth Street, Merthyr Tydfil. Here one of the artistes is called Chiarini, but the billing makes one a little suspicious. It runs, "Herr Chiarini (otherwise 'Chips') The Eiffel Tower Wonder, on his High Pyramid of Chairs." Why should an Italian be given a German prefix and a very English nickname? Add a French allusion to the description of the act and we have a remarkable example of the internationalism of the circus! For Christmas the Brothers Clarke went to the Crystal Palace.

That last year of the old century had seen Alfred Augustus and Charles start off with Plège. In the bill were the Cavallinis, clowns, and M.H. Despard as school rider. His name was to become closely associated with the family of Plège. Madame R. Despard appeared in the Pantomime Ballet, *Reve de Noel*, performed in March at Bordeaux. But from an historical viewpoint, perhaps the most interesting information is to be found in the billing of the future attractions, for it announces the debut of *La Danse Serpentine à Cheval, par Mlle Lucie Plège (Nouvelles Projections Electriques et Multicolores)*, and *Le Sulky, Dressage de Haute École en voiture, Creation de M. André Plège*.

How long the Clarkes stayed with Plège I do not know, but by July they had joined Busch in Hamburg, and Annie was once more with them. They were with Busch in Berlin during the month of September, and here both Annie and Charles are billed. There is also a Monsieur Alfred, who may well be Alfred Augustus. There is no note of a Christmas reunion this year, so we must assume that the family remained dispersed and that they saw the new century in separately. But with the dawn of the 1900's, the history of the Clarkes enters into a new phase. Not only is another generation almost ready to make its debut in the ring, but besides the contracts, programmes and letters, photographs record the places visited, and much time is spent in the Far East.

(To be continued)

1. Blanche Allarty, wife of Ernest Molier, whose amateur circus was the rage of Paris and where many French aristocrats performed.

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## Something Different Is Available For You

Rare photos of real circus life compiled in a 100 page 6"x9" book with 100 glossy photos enlarged from kodak pictures which I took in the 1920's and 1930's during the years when I was a circus performer in the Big Top. Several pictures of 8 beautiful Belgian horses pulling circus street parade wagons, several pictures of 10 to 12 elephants either walking or standing and how elephants were unloaded at the circus train, line-up of cowboys and cowgirls with their mounts, bare-back riders, lion and tiger trainers in action with these animals, ponies, dogs, monkeys, clowns, acrobats, flying act in action, a line-up of 18 beautiful girl aerialists and much, much more. There are no more traveling big circuses but you can see how they did travel. This beautiful circus picture book should be in everyone's household, as it is a real collectors item, so that children, teenagers and others can see what was in the past, also, makes an excellent gift. Send \$5 per book in check or money order (not cash) to Johnnie Schmidt, Route 1, Box 70-B, Alice, Texas 78332. Money back guarantee is for 10 days. Now read the above again. I thank you.







# Star Back Review

*Clown Alley.* By Bill Ballantine. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1982).

To paraphrase a former President, I want to make one point perfectly clear. I don't like clowns. I didn't find them funny when I was a child, and I don't now. Litterateurs since Dickens have breathed heavily about them, how they delineate human nature, how they appeal to some deep emotional well within us, how we all would go mad without them. But when the funsters come on, my attention shifts—so automatically that it has become an involuntary reflex—to the prop hands whose machinations I find fascinating.

I'm not a clown bigot; I keep an open mind. Once, in fact, I laughed hard at them. I was thirteen, the show was Kelly-Miller, and the reason for this uncharacteristic hysteria was due more to prop failure in a levitation gag than anything intrinsically humorous in the turn.

I've had this disease since childhood. I spent two or three hours with Felix Adler when I was about six. I saw him in the ring, and later watched him remove his makeup. We talked and I remember a kindly man, but the only statement that made any impression was his telling me that he had to buy six or eight (I don't remember the exact number) pigs a year because they grew so rapidly. I was absolutely entranced by this bit of trivia, which I pondered for days, mulling it over with doubtless the same intensity others gave to weightier matters.

It should surprise no one, then, that I approached this book with monumental apathy. To my surprise, it fell far short of expectations as I enjoyed the volume immensely. The author's sophisticated, urbane style, reminiscent of Henry Ringling North's ghost-writer, transcends its subject, which (and I loathe admitting this) I found interesting in itself.

This memoir chronicles the author's eight years of struggles and triumphs as dean of the Ringling-Barnum clown college. His qualifications for the job were a life-long interest in circuses and clowns, and four seasons on the

show in the late 1940's and early 1950's. While the narrative details his childhood in Pittsburgh, and the Ringling show in the North era, the real story begins one day in 1969 when he interviewed Irvin Feld for *Holiday* magazine. Soon the roles were reversed and Ballantine was the subject of a series of interviews which culminated in his becoming dean of the clown school.



In 1970 he joined the faculty, or rather became the faculty, of the clown college, then in its second year. Like many others, I dismissed the school as nothing more than a smart publicity gimmick, but the book makes clear the seriousness of the effort, and the author's dedication to the art. The curriculum was expanded and improved each year, and eventually the face of Ringling-Barnum clowning was changed. Buy 1974, 44 out of

the 54 clowns employed by the organization were graduates of the school. The story of turning the raw recruits into professional funnymen (and funnywomen), and the author's travails in teaching them is the main theme of the book.

The volume is full of sociological observations. With the keen eye of the detached insider, Ballantine discourses on topics such as caste systems on circuses, labor-management relations, and even why concessionaires love loud band music. It is, of course, full of insights on clowns and clowning. We are sure to see this book cited in many future papers and books.

Anyone interested in Irvin Feld, which includes virtually everyone reading this review, will find the book worthwhile. He emerges as a contradictory and complex figure; a detail man with vision. The author's frank discussion of his often rocky relationship with his boss provides some of the volume's most entertaining and informative passages.

The character sketches of well known show people are also highlights. Lou Jacobs, Emmett Kelly, Hugo Schmidt, and many others are profiled, and a fine tribute to Otto Griebling articulates his particular genius. I suspect scholars a hundred years hence will use this book the way we use John Glenroy's and George Conklin's today.

The book has no photographs, but the author's superb drawings tell us more than could a hundred pictures. One, of the circa 1947 Ringling cookhouse, depicts a scowling waiter, obviously unhappy about the size of the tip he holds in his hand, leaving the clowns' table as another waiter, this one with a recently blackened eye, insouciantly bumps a bowl of soup against a clown's head. One of the diner's at the table is reading *Billboard's* circus section while most of the others indifferently eat their meals. This is the kind of stuff Harry Atwell or Fred Glasier couldn't capture on film.

In spite of myself, I enjoyed this work and learned from it. And I have a confession to make. About five years



ago I saw the Ringling clowns and found one amusing. I didn't laugh, but I did smile. This book tells me that that singularly funny clown was a product of the clown college. They did something right. The next time I go to a circus, I'll watch the clowns; I hope the prop boys forgive me.

Fred D. Pfening III

*A History of the Circus.* By George Speaight (A.S. Barnes & Co., New York, 1980).

Within the past five years at least four histories of the circus have been published here and abroad. Comprehensive histories of such a complex subject generally leave the reader with the same feeling he has when he eats too fast. Digestion is difficult. And since the ones already present vary from dull to excellent, the publication of yet another might well be greeted with scepticism by the circus bibliophile.

George Speaight's *A History of the Circus* is refreshingly different from most of those recently offered, however. He has done us the favor of writing the history of the various acts presented in the arena, and a kind favor it is. Instead of being one of those hurried glances across the ages with lesser shows acknowledged by a

line or two, this volume concentrates on the great performers and their specialties. The shows themselves, in the guise of the histories of the proprietors, is here, but much muted, the emphasis being where it is in the circus itself, on the program.

Speaight concentrates on the English and American circuses for, as he puts it, they were "the pillars that hold up the structure of the book." And one can readily see that as far as size, expenditure of capital and innovation it is the "English speaking" circus that leads those of other cultures. This might give us pause, in another subject, as it indicates that other nations might have been doing more important things than we know of, but none of that here.

Beginning, as he should, with the groundwork of the Fairs and riding masters the author goes into Astley and Hughes and then concentrates on English acts of the nineteenth century. He then tells us of the American circus and for an Englishman (i.e. for a man not immersed in American circus history, not having nostalgia as a helper) he does an excellent job. The general European scene is next, then the twentieth century.

Throughout, Speaight demonstrates solid research into the various types of acts, and this is the type of information that excites other historians, but may be dull for the

general public. This reviewer was unable to find a single type of act that was not mentioned in the book.

A prodigious amount of research has gone into the book; it is obvious on each page. Speaight has consulted the proper sources in that he has avoided most of the questionable work in existence, insofar as the portions dealing with the American circus are concerned. This is a hurdle in itself. To an American historian of the institution, Speaight's obvious generous use of *Bandwagon* is rewarding; it's often overlooked by historians.

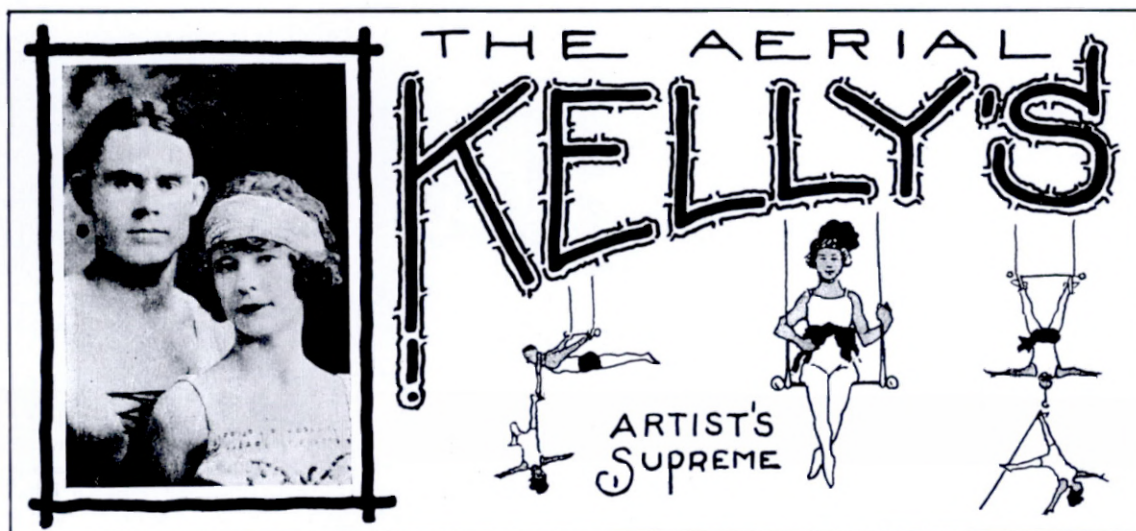
In seeking fault we found Speaight's occasional use of first person experience or attitude less than professional, but it is not present in enough volume to call for more than a remark.

The illustrations are interesting, but unremarkable with the possible exception of some of the European prints, which we are not able to judge the rarity of; however, there are a goodly number, rare or not.

The unique position that this volume immediately acquires, that of being the most complete history of the acts presented in the circus over its history, would dictate one's buying it. The very reasonable price indicates that everyone with an interest in the subject should buy it.

Stuart Thayer

## BILL KASISKA'S LETTERHEADS



Emmett and Eva Kelly presented a double trapeze act in the 1920s. Kelly began his clowning career in the early 1930s. Kelly designed this letterhead himself, as he was an accomplished artist. It is printed in black with red outline of the name and photo.



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